



## **PRACTICAL BOOK SELECTION**



# **A Manual of Practical Book Selection for Public Libraries**

**By  
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**With an Introduction by  
HAROLD GROOM**

**LIBRARIAN, HESTON AND ISLEWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

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## INTRODUCTION.

SINCE commencing to give short courses of lectures on Book Selection at the Spring Grove Polytechnic it has occurred to me that there was room for a textbook dealing with the *practical* side of this subject for the use of students preparing for the Examination of the Library Association.

I stress the word *practical* inasmuch as on examining the recommended books in the L.A. Syllabus one finds that only one of them can be regarded as treating this all important branch of our work from other than a theoretical or semi-theoretical standpoint.

There is undoubtedly a wealth of fugitive material scattered throughout the professional journals and textbooks on library economy in general, but little or no attempt has been made to co-ordinate the material within the confines of a single volume.

I have seen it deplored that examination candidates display a lamentable lack of original thought in their work. In respect of Book Selection this is quite understandable for the simple reason that on an average not more than one question in ten gives scope for a display of other than purely "textbook" knowledge. In other words the examination is essentially a practical one.

Despite this, however, the student has in the past been badly served as regards a comprehensive practical survey of the subject, and Mr. Bonny is to be congratulated on producing a book which fills an undoubted gap in our professional literature. Not only will it be of great service to students, it will also be of material use to the busy librarian in carrying out one of his most important and difficult duties, viz., the selection of books.

HAROLD GROOM.

Hounslow Public Library.  
March 31st, 1939.

## PREFACE

As librarians we are well aware of the importance of book selection and that the public, justifiably, often judges libraries in terms of the book service. The present work is intended to indicate the principles and practice necessary to conduct book selection on a soundly organised basis, together with such detail as is required by students.

Obviously, problems of book selection must vary from urban library to urban library, county library to county library, and from one district to another. Further, there is a balance to be maintained between ephemeral and worth-while books; there is still far from being any general agreement or policy regarding the extent and nature of duplication; and to what extent should we purchase second-hand in preference to new books? Three second-hand books for the price of one new one means that more duplication becomes possible. And the problem of short-lived books—should we buy liberally and discard, or purchase cautiously, declining to pander to popular demand?

But the problems of book selection are also bound up with the organisation of library systems and the extent to which books are systematically distributed, and exploited, over the library system as against haphazard methods of distribution.

It would be presumptuous for me to claim to have exhausted every aspect of the subject from the viewpoint of every locality—and locality is an extremely important determinant of book selection—but experience in a number of library systems, urban and county, both in the north and in the south, has yielded a certain perspective.

I am deeply grateful to Mr. Harold Groom for reading the MS. and for his criticisms and suggestions; to Mr. John Warner for permission to base Chapter VII on the appropriate chapter of his *Reference Library Methods* (Grafton, 1928); to Mr. B. Oliph Smith for advice on Chapter XI; and to Mr. Donald Shapland for advice on the list of commercial, scientific and technical periodicals.

As author I am, of course, responsible for all opinions expressed, unless otherwise stated.

HAROLD V. BONNY.

Southampton.  
May, 1939.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE PRINCIPLES OF BOOK SELECTION . . . . .	I
Aim and purpose ; Range or appeal ; The evaluation of demand ; Demand—actual or hypothetical ; Book selection—a science ? Bias of the book selector ; Recapitulation.	
II. GUIDES TO BOOK SELECTION . . . . .	15
General guides ; Selective guides ; Special guides ; Aids to current book selection ; Children's books, reference books, and foreign literature.	
III. THE INDIVIDUAL BOOK . . . . .	50
Editions, series, etc. ; Translators ; Physical characteristics—binding, paper, type ; Paper covered books.	
IV. FACTORS IN BOOK SELECTION . . . . .	58
The library system ; The library public and the community survey ; Proportions of stock ; Financial considerations.	
V. THE METHOD OF BOOK SELECTION . . . . .	69
Current Book Selection ; Book Reviews ; Staff Book Committee ; Readers' suggestions.	
VI. BOOK SELECTION FOR LENDING LIBRARIES . . . . .	84
Scope of stock ; Non-fiction ; Fiction ; Particular subjects ; Books for the blind ; National and local influences ; Duplication ; Censorship ; Conclusion.	
VII. BOOK SELECTION FOR REFERENCE LIBRARIES . . . . .	96
Scope of reference department and types of reference books ; General principles of selection ; Particular subjects ; Local and special collections.	



	PAGE
VIII. BOOK SELECTION FOR COMMERCIAL, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LIBRARIES Development of commercial, science and technology libraries ; Scope of stock ; Guides to selection ; Commercial, scientific and technical periodicals.	104
IX. BOOK SELECTION FOR CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES Percentages of stock according to age ; Guides and principles of selection ; Censorship ; Format ; Periodicals.	117
X. BOOK SELECTION FOR BRANCH LIBRARIES Centralisation ; Basic stock ; Exchanges of stock ; Reference service.	124
XI. BOOK SELECTION FOR COUNTY LIBRARIES Aims and purpose of county libraries ; Regional branches ; Book stocks—general and students' sections ; Sizes of book stocks ; Duplication ; Local collections ; Selection for branches and centres ; Reference departments ; Children's libraries ; Suggestions and requisitions.	130
XII. THE SELECTION OF PERIODICALS AND MAGAZINES Necessary limitation of expenditure on periodicals and magazines ; Principles of selection.	147
XIII. THE SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR A NEW LIBRARY Method of selection ; Question of a basic stock and principles of selection ; Provision of books in reinforced publishers casing and facsimile bindings ; Purchasing.	153
XIV. THE ORGANISATION OF BOOK PURCHASE Method of purchase, the librarian as sole arbiter, a Books sub-committee and/or a booklist ; Financial considerations—the Net Book Agreement, and the maintenance of stock ; Secondhand, review copies and remainders.	162

## CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
<b>XV. DISCARDING AND REVISION OF STOCK .</b>	<b>171</b>
Necessity and reasons for discarding; Types of books to discard; Editions; Particular subjects; Pool stock; Method of discarding and replacement; Revision of stock.	
<b>XVI. CONCLUSION . . . . .</b>	<b>181</b>
Book selection—art or science? New trends in library practice; Supply creates demand; quality of the book selector.	

## DIAGRAMS

	PAGE
Figure 1 Community survey graph . . . . .	64
„ 2 Order card . . . . .	71
„ 3 Herefordshire County Libraries—Regional branches . . . . .	135
„ 4 Discarding and replacement card . . . . .	179



# PRACTICAL BOOK SELECTION

## CHAPTER I

### THE PRINCIPLES OF BOOK SELECTION

Aim and purpose.—Range or appeal.—The evaluation of demand.—Demand—actual or hypothetical.—Book selection—a science?—Bias of the book selector.—Recapitulation.

#### AIM AND PURPOSE

WHAT is our aim as librarians? The theme of the present work is that it is to provide the best books and to make them available in the best possible manner. As I believe Melvil Dewey once said, "The right book at the right time for the right person."

Exactly what is a best book we shall try to discover—or, rather, discuss the methods available to us as librarians by which we may ascertain which are the best books—in later chapters.

As regards making the book-stock available in the best possible manner, this is not, unfortunately, within our scope, being a matter both of library routine and organization generally. Though in actual fact there can be no doubt that book selection is the chief function and duty of the librarian and his staff. Good books are to the librarian what first-class materials are to the craftsman, and book selection may be described as the job from which

all other of the librarian's duties spring. Cataloguing and classification, important though they indubitably are, require only the application of certain rigid scientific and technical principles. These principles of cataloguing and classification are constant, in any particular code of cataloguing or scheme of classification, irrespective of one's geographical situation. Yet locality is one determinant—and an extremely important determinant—of the books which are to be added to a public library.

We must remember, however, that selecting books according to locality does not necessarily presuppose that we must purchase books of a certain technical nature consequent upon the trades and industries of the district.

Man's cultural and intellectual inclinations must be taken into account, in addition to his occupational or professional interests. Leisure-time pursuits may be in the nature of hobbies, crafts, or sports, with a consequent demand upon such books, or purely recreational reading may be desired.

The variety of reading for which a library has to cater is unlimited. But are we to stock our libraries in accordance with the needs of the locality? Most certainly, yes!

#### RANGE OR APPEAL

But let us consider the pros and cons individually. Should we stock by range or appeal? and by a potential as opposed to an expressed demand? This, to students of book-selection, is a perennial topic. It might be expressed in another manner. Should we buy books which cover all—or all of the most important—subjects, or should we buy only those which we definitely know our public requires?

But how can we know what our public requires? We know that, in most districts, the more popular authors of to-day will be in demand. We know that people will want to learn shorthand, French, German, etc. We know that popular books on wireless, gardening, motoring, etc., will be asked for in greater or smaller numbers according to the locality. We know that people in a district predominantly agricultural—a county town, for instance—or in a district engaged in the leather or hosiery trade, are not likely to ask for abstruse metallurgical treatises.

But it must be borne in mind that these instances, which could be multiplied again and again, are not given as immutable laws. They are what is likely or not likely to happen. Industry, trades, and learning are not static geographically, to-day. There has been, for instance, an unmistakable southward trend of industry.

Should the librarian arrange on the public library shelves a stock of books representative of all—or at the best the most important—branches of learning? Should we cater for the borrower who *might* come in, and buy books which *might* be asked for? The answers are in the affirmative, but the principle should be applied in moderation, and not with the intent of building up a museum-like collection of books. The needs, resources, and opportunities of individual libraries will differ. One library authority will serve a larger or smaller area than another. The small library serving a population of, say, 30,000 will have neither the same book fund nor accommodation as the library serving a population of a quarter of a million.

But in adopting this principle of stocking by

range we must apply the principle of reason. We should buy the book if it is reasonable for us to do so. It would be reasonable for the librarian of the small library mentioned above to purchase a set of Addison's works for the student—or general reader—who might wish to read a particular essay of Addison's. But it would not be reasonable for him to buy, say, Glassstone's *Electrochemistry of Solutions* unless he were situated in an area with industries bearing on the subject. Again, the librarian of a large industrial city would require to have available sets of Patent specifications, but which would be of little value to the public of a small country town.

Again, in justification of stocking by range we must remember the reader who may wish to browse around the library shelves to choose a book which may "catch his eye." For him books often will be revealed. He may have had a holiday in a remote Cornish village and see a book on that locality which would re-awaken his interest. He may have an interest in gardening and discover a book on some flower or vegetable which he has not been able to grow very successfully. Another borrower might read of, or have some association with, a certain sculptor or artist and notice a book on the man, on the shelves. We can certainly multiply instances as these from our own personal experience. Yet, it is not inferred that as librarians we should lead or educate the public taste in books. The book should be chosen irrespective of the personal bias or prejudice of the librarian as will be seen in later chapters. It is our duty as librarians to make the best books available and to provide a sound comprehensive selection for the reader who is likely to make reasonable demands upon the library's

services. We must not forget the potential reader, and all present library users are latent users of the library in another department of art or science than it is their usual custom to frequent.

But in recent years the problem of stocking a library by range, especially for the librarian of the small or medium-sized library has been considerably modified—or perhaps we should use the word clarified. The introduction of the Regional Library schemes working in conjunction with the National Central Library has meant that books of a definitely “out of the way” variety in so far as our own borrowers are concerned can be borrowed, if they should be required, through the Regional Library service. Our attitude, however, should not be lackadaisical to the extent that we do not buy all the books we should have bought previously. If a book was worth purchasing for the library before the introduction of this scheme, it is surely worth buying now. In cases of definite doubt whether the book will be used by our public or if we cannot afford and/or probably will have no further use for a particular treatise, reliance may be placed upon the Regional Library scheme. The scheme has helped to free the funds for the purchase of more widely-read books and for libraries to specialise in subjects for book purchase—a form of co-operation in book selection, in fact.

Thus the Regional Library scheme has clarified our position in that we may consider our book selection in the light of national—and not purely local—requirements and resources. We have seen above that the intelligent or enquiring reader may come to the library and expect to find some book or books on a subject which interests him at the moment. The question of appeal goes further than that,



however. The question of stocking by range is a qualitative one, but stocking by appeal may resolve itself into a quantitative one. The appeal is usually in certain well defined direction or directions.

### THE EVALUATION OF DEMAND

It is obvious that the demands upon a library's book stock are not in equal proportions. That is, some sections and subjects are more popular than others. This demand must be evaluated. It is usually found that about 70 per cent. of the books borrowed from a library are fiction, and it is obvious that non-fiction readers would be unduly penalised if our libraries contained only 30 per cent. of non-fiction. Frequently, fiction reading is limited to books in a certain well-defined category—that of light reading.

Therefore, we have, to decide the value of a book as literature or as an important, or worth-while, book on the subject. The ethics of the supply of ephemeral books is not our present concern, but all librarians have experienced the heavy demand for the popular novel and, useful as all reading is to some degree, we cannot justify swamping the library shelves with ephemeral literature. It may be argued in some quarters that the supply of fiction is best left to commercial and twopenny libraries, but there can be no doubt that the public library being a civic institution all citizens have a right to use its services. And the right of those who require recreational reading may be as just as the right of the student. It is sometimes when we try to compare the rights of various types of recreational readers that the matter becomes odious. Reading taste is often a matter predetermined by our early education, or lack of it,

and affected by our adult employment that it is at least unfair to turn away from the library shelves the man, or woman, who through no fault of his own does not read highbrow, or even middlebrow, literature. But when the supply of ephemeral books encroaches upon the satisfaction of the needs of the student and the searcher after information, it should be stopped. The public library is, after all, an educational—and I use education in its broadest sense—institution.

This suggests that the demand must in some way be evaluated. The evaluation of demand has been treated in great detail by Mr. L. R. McColvin in *The Theory of Book Selection for Public Libraries*, where he has expounded a scientific methodology for arriving at the representation of different classes of books in a library. This is discussed later in this chapter.

There is another factor in the evaluation of demand which has been modified since the introduction of the Regional Library schemes. That is, the very specialised, technical, or unusual book which is sometimes asked for. In the past we may have hesitated at purchasing a book owing to the improbability of its being wanted again. But now the situation is altered, for we may know that, provided we can really afford to purchase it, that book is available not only to our own readers but to the whole of the British Isles. The librarian should not be allowed to think that because a book he would not ordinarily purchase may be borrowed through the Regional Bureau or the National Central Library he is therefore exonerated from purchasing same. He should not become lazy about his book selection and place reliance upon another source. The Regional Lib-

rary scheme may, in fact, enable us to satisfy our own local readers to a much greater degree, and, by way of return loan some of our own book stock to the readers of another public library.

But is there a principle involved? How can we tell whether to purchase a book on an abstruse subject or not? I think that the criterion must be that of its use to our own local readers. If, for instance, our library is in a middle-class London suburb we should expect to find a fair quota of University and other students amongst our readers. They will require academic treatises of all descriptions. Provided the demand is present, and we have the necessary provision in our book fund, it should be our duty to provide the books asked for unless the books are of a transitory nature, and constantly being superseded by new editions. This happens, for instance, in the case of many subjects affected by Acts of Parliament—books on Income Tax, for example. Some of these books on Income Tax cost as much as two or three guineas and it is manifestly impossible to purchase every new edition, much as this is desirable. On the other hand this suburban library would be shirking its responsibilities if it did not purchase Moyle's *Institutes of Justinian* in response to repeated demand. This is a book definitely of permanent value. It should be admitted, however, that a librarian may borrow a book through the Regional Library Bureau if he feels that the request is unlikely to occur again, but if it should occur again he, or his Committee, should seriously consider its acquisition if it fulfils the conditions of permanence mentioned above. In fact, one of the great values of the Regional Library scheme is that it allows us to experiment in our book selection

and to test our demand without committing ourselves to purchase. There can be no definite line drawn to indicate what we should not purchase. The demand for a very technical metallurgical treatise might occur in this hypothetical residential suburb, but it is most unlikely to recur, and the request may be forwarded to the Regional Bureau which will pass on the request to one of the libraries in an industrial area devoted to this subject.

#### DEMAND—ACTUAL OR HYPOTHETICAL

Another topic to be investigated, and which in fact is closely allied to the evaluation of demand, is, should we stock our libraries in response to or in anticipation of demand?

In selecting a book we may consider whether a book is unlikely to be read or whether it ought to be read. It is sometimes a question of taste, and as librarians we should avoid any suggestion of a dictatorship of taste in reading. Yet experience has shown that we can encourage reading by the intelligent supply of good books.

It is obviously much better to have a book immediately available when asked for than for the request to have to go through the routine procedure consequent upon a reader's suggestion—unless it be a suggestion for a work which is not of general importance but only of value to the specialist or student, and which we should have to consider purchasing or borrowing through the Regional Library scheme. Thus in so far as we do not violate any of the principles enunciated in this chapter we should anticipate the demand. This is, after all, part of our job as librarians and indicative of our skill as book selectors.

It is redundant to remark that if the good books

are not available they will not be read. Nevertheless some stimulation of the reading interests of our borrowers is healthy. This can only be done by sound book selection and anticipation of demand. Only by this can we create, encourage and foster good reading.

Every citizen is a potential reader. By applying the mechanics of the reading process learnt during childhood and developed during adolescence, he, or she, may ask for books to elucidate any problems concerned with everyday life; from a technical work connected with the reader's job or profession to an elementary or popular work on some outside activity, hobby or craft; from an academic treatise on philosophy or sociology according to the tastes of the borrower to a book on some particular sport or mode or district of travel according to the way of taking physical exercise during leisure time. And again, many of us, at one time or another, require a novel as a means of escape from the more mundane things of life varying in type according to our tastes.

It is demands of this description which we have to anticipate when stocking our libraries. It can only be done by bearing in the mind the types of readers in our district, and by providing a range of books with a good book or books on most subjects. We cannot expect to have a book on every subject in our library (incidentally it would in any case be more or less impossible to trace books on some particular subjects), but we can utilise our experience plus a modicum of that precious but all too rare gift of common sense, in building up this range to make it wide and comprehensive enough to anticipate all reasonable demands which may be made upon it.

## BOOK SELECTION—A SCIENCE?

But can we be more concrete about the faculty of utilising our experience as suggested above? Unfortunately not, book selection is an art dependent upon too many inconstant qualities to bring it within the realms of science. These qualities differ according to time, place and person. And it might be as well to consider the number of persons connected with the selection of books, from, possibly, author's agent; to publisher, or his reader; to editors and reviewers, not to mention the book-seller and traveller.

Rarely, if at all, does the ideal book exist. Usually the librarian knows insufficient of the probable reader's psychological self to be able to prescribe a book or course of reading with any degree of scientific accuracy. And if the ideal treatise, relative to a particular person's needs, were discovered or prescribed, there probably would be some physical detractions—unsuitable print, binding or paper. Book selection is not yet a science. The actual selection, which is different from the method of selection, is nothing more or less than a haphazard performance. There can be no scientific laws by which we may determine the quality of a book (the fact that seemingly equally good books are written from opposite standpoints should go to prove this) as we may determine, for instance, the nature of a metal and the quality thereof.

The first step in book selection should be to ascertain the reading interests of our readers—the psychology of reading, but little research on the psychology of reading has been done in this country as yet, though investigations are proceeding in

America. Work done on this subject and the method of the community survey are discussed in Chapter III.

Instead, it is sometimes remarked that we select books by instinct, but book selection cannot by any means be termed an instinct. It is too much to expect that we are born with an instinct of book selection, but as has been mentioned above we can exploit the results of the accumulation of our experience to aid us in our book selection—we can develop our practice until it virtually becomes intuitive.

It has been mentioned above that we should endeavour to provide a good book on most subjects that we should select the best books. "Good" and "best" are, of course, relative terms. The book must be "good" in relation to the needs of the reader. To this we should add the proviso that the requirements must be evaluated. Mr. L. R. McColvin in *The Theory of Book Selection for Public Libraries* has discussed the question of the "evaluation of demand." Mr. McColvin's thesis is that as it is impossible to supply all books which might be asked for in a public library this demand must be evaluated. Demand may be divided into volume, value and variety. Volume and value of demand are by themselves, no criterion. Obviously, the greatest volume of demand is not necessarily of the greatest value. Mr. McColvin defines "value" as "the force tending to the development of mind, the enrichment of experience, and the promotion of understanding and sympathy." Often books which are of great value are little used. Hence, the two factors have to be related. The subject is given a number to denote its relative value and the volume of demand is also represented by a number. The

two numbers are then multiplied and the resulting answer indicates the proportion of books of a particular subject which should be included in the library's stock.

#### BIAS OF BOOK SELECTOR

At all times the book selector must endeavour to lay aside his personal opinions or prejudices. This is obviously not at all an easy matter. Bias may be religious or political or may be directed to a particular school of thought in the academic arts or sciences. The difficulties which may arise through the representation of books of a left wing variety are considered in Chapter V, but it is unnatural, and unhealthy, for a man not to have convictions about what is right or wrong in controversial matters. It is desirable also that as librarians we take special interest in and study a certain subject or subjects. In this we will no doubt have our allegiances, but as librarians we should select books representative of all schools of thought and utilise any special knowledge we may have against the inclusion of worthless books. We must be impartial but not let this be an excuse for adding inferior books to the library in an attempt to represent all schools of thought.

#### RECAPITULATION

The mechanics of book selection and the pros and cons of both selecting in particular subjects and for particular departments and classes of libraries are considered in later chapters, but we may enumerate here the cardinal principles of book selection.

1. Stock first by range and then by appeal.
2. Book selection must be primarily in relation to the needs of the community which the



library serves, but also bear in mind our national responsibility consequent upon the introduction of the Regional Library scheme.

3. Provide for actual demand and anticipate any reasonable demands which may be made upon the library's resources.
4. Evaluate the demand, as far as possible.
5. Beware lest personal bias affects book selection, and guard against the personal bias of certain types of reader in pushing certain subjects, *e.g.*, religion, antiquarian, mystic, etc.

## CHAPTER II

### GUIDES TO BOOK SELECTION

WE will divide the various types of guides for book selectors into :

1. General guides.
2. Selective guides.
3. Special guides.
4. Aids to current book selection.
  - (a) Publishers' lists.
  - (b) Reviews.
  - (c) Lists issued by societies, libraries and other bodies.
5. Children's books, reference books, and foreign literature.

The actual method of selection will be studied in Chapters IV and V, but we must here obtain an understanding of the various guides which it is necessary for us to consult in order to perform this work.

When selecting the current stock of a public library the general and special guides will be purely of a reference value. On the one hand they tell us the bibliographical particulars—publisher, price, date—and on the other they often include annotations which aid us in deciding whether or not to purchase the book. We may require to know this in the case of books recommended by borrowers or in purchasing books

on particular subjects either in response to particular demand or in order to strengthen and bring up to date a certain section of the book stock.

#### GENERAL GUIDES : ENGLISH

The English trade bibliographies are :—

(i) *Reference Catalogue of Current Literature.*

This comprised two large volumes consisting of the catalogues of most English publishers arranged in alphabetical order. A third volume contained an index of authors and titles and partially of subjects. Its drawbacks were the lack of a complete subject index and the fact that it did not include catalogues from every publisher. In some of the catalogues the entries were arranged in classified order by the publisher, but this is of course only of limited assistance. It was of particular value in so far as most publishers give greater details about the editions, etc., than is possible in the other bibliographies.

In November, 1935, however, the *Reference Catalogue of Current Literature* appeared in a new format and the defects mentioned above have to some extent been remedied. It is now one large volume and the publishers' catalogues are no longer included. Instead the first section is an author index and the second a title index. This latter includes partial subject representation.

A second edition in this new format was published in January, 1938.

In this way it loses any advantages which there may be in referring the consultant directly to the publishers' catalogues as in the former editions, and of course, the entries and bibliographical particulars now have to be given in a highly condensed form.

(ii) *English Catalogue of Books.*

This is an annual publication consisting of cumulatives of the *Publishers' Circular*. It is an alphabetical list of authors and titles in one sequence. The subject index is incorporated in the same reference, and the work is therefore very easy to consult. It has been in existence, in various forms, since 1801.

(iii) *Whitaker's Cumulative Book List.*

This was commenced in 1924 and is published annually with quarterly cumulations. The entries are classified with an author-and-title index.

GENERAL GUIDES : AMERICAN

Similar American works are :

(i) *Publishers' Trade List Annual.*

This was first published in 1873 and is roughly parallel to the former *Reference Catalogue*. It consists of the catalogues of most American publishers. Its disadvantages are similar to those of the *Reference Catalogue* in that it is difficult to locate books on a particular subject. It is published by the R. R. Bowker Company.

(ii) *United States Catalog.*

This is published by the H. W. Wilson Company. It was first issued in 1900. The 1928 edition contained entries for 190,000 books then in print in the United States. They are indexed under author, title and subject. It is kept up to date by the *Cumulative Book Index* which is published monthly and cumulated annually and periodically issued in supplement form. The *Cumulative Book Index* is approximately parallel to Whitaker's *Cumulative Book-list*.

(iii) *Book Review Digest.*

This, as its title suggests, is a list of current publications with excerpts from reviews appended to each entry. It is arranged in alphabetical order by author with subject-and-title index. The index entries for fiction are further subdivided to indicate novels of various types, such as mystery novels, historical novels (arranged topographically), ghost stories and so on.

After each entry it is usual to give digests of reviews. The annotations given are intended to indicate the scope and contents of the book and are rarely evaluative.

Names of periodicals, and dates, where other reviews of the same book may be consulted are given together with symbols to indicate whether the review was favourable or not. Though a very extensive selection is made it is not a complete list.

It was commenced in 1905 by the H. W. Wilson Company and is published monthly on the cumulative basis. A six-monthly cumulation appears in August and the bound annual volume in February. The index is cumulated continuously throughout the year and complete cumulations are published every five years.

It is hardly necessary to affirm the value and importance of a work of this description for reference purposes. It is to be regretted, however, that it is not an English compilation, although many excerpts from English reviews are given, and nearly always, in the case of books published in England, indication is given by means of the symbols whether the English reviews are favourable. The monthly cumulations do not, of course, appear sufficiently soon after the publication of the books to be of great help in current

book selection, though they are a valuable check-list and of assistance in evaluating readers' suggestions and similar work. A useful feature is the list of periodicals from which reviews are taken.

#### SELECTIVE GUIDES : ENGLISH

There are numerous selective guides to book selection—from Sonnenschein's *Best Books* to books like Robertson's *Courses of Study*. (3rd edition, 1932), and *Standard Books : an annotated and classified guide to the best books in all departments of Literature*. (Nelson, 4 vols., 1912-15).

We will consider the most important :

(i) Sonnenschein, W. S. *The Best Books : a Reader's Guide*.

This work began by the publication of two volumes in 1910-12 and three more in 1923, 1926 and 1931, and volume 6—index of authors, titles and subjects—in 1935.

Approximately 100,000 books are listed in the five volumes, arranged under separate headings, indicated by letters, subdivided numerically. The value of Sonnenschein to the small library is, of course, limited. The annotations are good though few, if somewhat cryptically given owing to the extensive use of abbreviations. The selection is most catholic.

(ii) Library Association. *Books to Read*, 1930. Supplement, 1931.

This was primarily a guide to young readers between 12 and 18, and listed some 5,000 non-fiction volumes and 1,500 fiction. It also attempted to provide a guide to the most important books in the English language. Easily read books are marked

with an asterisk and more advanced books by a dagger.

It consists of :

- (a) Comprehensive author and title index.
- (b) Detailed descriptive class list arranged according to the Dewey Decimal classification.
- (c) Descriptive list of novels and romances.
- (d) Detailed alphabetical subject index.

It is unfortunate that this valiant attempt by the Library Association was not continued by means of the yearly supplements as originally envisaged (except for 1931), although it has since been brought up to date by :

Library Association. *Books for Youth : a classified and annotated guide* ; ed. by W. C. Berwick Sayers. New edn., 1936.

It consists of a list of over 3,000 non-fiction books arranged under subject headings according to the Dewey classification and about 1,500 fiction arranged alphabetically by authors, followed by an index of authors, subjects, and titles, in one sequence. "Authors of fiction, as such, are omitted, as the Author-list of Fiction . . . is its own index, but the titles of fiction are included."

(iii) Munford, W. A. *Three thousand books for a public library : some significant and representative works for basic stock*. 1939.

"The arrangement throughout is, in broad outline, that of the thirteenth edition of the Dewey Decimal classification . . ." Whilst it is not suggested that the books mentioned should be in all libraries, the compiler states that "most of them will be found useful in most libraries."

(iv) Philip, A. J. *Best Books of the Year*, 1929 to date.

These annual volumes, as their title suggests, give the most important books published during each year and list approximately 2,500 volumes. They are arranged in Dewey class order with indexes of authors.

(v) It would not be fitting to conclude this section without reference to the excellent guides published by some public libraries in England. There are complete catalogues such as :

Liverpool Public Libraries : *Catalogue of works of non-fiction added to the lending libraries, 1925-1935*, (it is arranged according to the dictionary plan) ; and selective ones such as *Four thousand recommended books for the general reader* published by The Dagenham Public Libraries, 1st edition, 1931, 2nd edition, 1933, which is arranged in Dewey class order with a subject index.

Many libraries, too, publish annual lists of the best books added to the library during that particular year. The catalogue issued by the Bethnal Green Public Libraries is a superb example of what such a catalogue should be—although it rarely includes scientific, technical, or commercial books.

The fault of these catalogues is that they have a comparatively short life and they require frequent new editions to keep them up to date. A comparison of the two editions of the Dagenham catalogue is very interesting. Amongst other things it may be noticed that 25 per cent. of the books in the 2nd edition did not appear in the 1st edition.

Catalogues such as these are particularly of great value in selecting the stock of a new library.



## SELECTIVE GUIDES : AMERICAN

(i) *A.L.A. Catalog*, 1926. Prepared by Melvil Dewey in 1879, an experimental edition was published for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 under the title of *Catalog of A.L.A. Library*. Its usefulness was at once recognised and in the forthcoming year a Publishing Board was instituted consisting of members from the American Library Association, New York State Library and Library of Congress. As a result the *A.L.A. Catalog : 8,000 Volumes for a Popular Library, with notes* was published in 1904. Three supplements have been issued :

1904-11. 1912.

1912-21. 1923.

1926-31. 1933.

The books are selected by librarians and specialists and annotations given. The 1926 edition lists 10,000 books as opposed to the 7,500 of 1904. An objection may be raised that its being limited to 10,000 volumes imposes a great restriction on the scope of the work.

(ii) *Standard Catalog for public libraries*. This is published by the H. W. Wilson Company and is similar in scope and purpose to the *A.L.A. Catalog*. The "Non-fiction" volume was published in 1934 and the "Fiction Section" in 1931. Together they list about 14,000 books.

The fourth cumulative supplement to the 1934 "Non-Fiction" volume was published in 1938. A new revised edition is to be published in 1940 and a new edition of the "Fiction Catalog" is announced for publication this year. Annotations are given and books which are recommended for purchase by small libraries are denoted by an asterisk.

There are numerous other selective lists of recommended books. Space precludes a description of all these, but two important ones are :

(iii) Graham, Bessie. *The Bookman's Manual*. This was first published in 1921, a second edition in 1924, a third in 1928 and a fourth in 1935. In this, authors are listed alphabetically under each field of literature, such as fiction, poetry, drama, etc. Usually, a brief description is given of the author and his work, followed by a list of his works arranged chronologically by date of publication, with details of publisher and price.

(iv) Dickinson, A. D. *The best books of the decade, 1926-35. 1937.*

This most interesting selection consists of 800 titles arranged alphabetically by author. The essential identifying facts about each author are given together with a critical description of the book.

An interesting, and valuable, feature is the indication of the value attached to the books by the consensus of the best obtainable critical opinion. This is denoted by a number—"rating"—given in bold face type alongside each entry. Scores range between a minimum of 80 and a maximum of 380.

Useful supplements are given in the form of lists of the best books of the decade—"Best poetry of the decade," "The nineteen best books on science," etc.

Very few public librarians indeed will need to have recourse to the trade bibliographies of continental countries. They will be of use to large provincial libraries having a special department for books in foreign languages. A good library of foreign books would no doubt be greatly appreciated in London,

but this is not likely to materialise whilst the libraries are administered by a large number of separate library authorities.

### GUIDES TO SPECIAL SUBJECTS

Obviously many of the selective guides mentioned above form very valuable guides to book selection in special subjects, particularly as they have the specific aim of giving the best books on each subject which is mostly what the librarian requires.

Class catalogues issued by individual libraries are also invaluable. Of course, these do not include bibliographical particulars of publisher and price (being intended for library users—not book selectors !) but these details may easily be obtained from Whitaker's *Reference Catalogue*, *The English Catalogue*, etc.

We will refer briefly to these library catalogues. The "What to Read" series issued by the Leeds Public Libraries are a series of handbooks on specific subjects, each handbook containing an introduction to that subject by an expert and a selective reading list. They are now a little out of date being mostly issued before 1930, and it is to be hoped that new editions are forthcoming, although this library authority is now publishing reading lists which, though excellent, are more conventional. "Recall to Religion" and "Why die before your time" (physical training, etc.) are recent titles.

Lists on all subjects have been issued by the Middlesex County Libraries. These are wider in scope than the Leeds lists and are admirable surveys of the literature of the subjects with which they deal. These lists cover the whole of the Dewey Decimal classification and include many on individual sub-

jects, as "Electrical Engineering," "Printing," "Building Construction," "Gardening," etc. After 1932 these catalogues took on a new format and since then two more have been published: "European History," 1933, and "Social Problems," 1936. In this latter catalogue, which covers the Dewey 300 class, the entries are arranged under broad subject headings, which are in classified order, while references are made from related subjects. Selective reading lists on specific subjects are now included in the bulletin of the Middlesex County Libraries—"Books to read."

Another County Library to initiate a series of printed catalogues is Herefordshire. "Farm and Garden" and "Stage and Screen" are representative titles which speak for themselves.

Whilst mentioning lists issued by County Libraries, it should be remembered that the County Libraries section of the Library Association is now issuing a series of subject lists. These are invaluable in that they also include details of publisher and price.

The book selector should be on the look-out for occasional subject lists issued by various libraries. It is always as well to check one's own book stock by them, note which books are not in stock and if it is thought desirable that certain sections require strengthening consult the *Book Review Digest* to ascertain the general opinion on the book or books concerned.

Thus, for instance we may mention "Coal and Coalmining" issued by the Sunderland Public Libraries, "Books for Craftsmen" by the Dagenham Public Libraries, "Modern Drama, 1900-1935" by the Derbyshire County Libraries, and catalogues of books on the cinema have recently been issued both by the Bristol and the Leeds Public Libraries.

Guides and handbooks issued in connection with Commercial, Scientific and Technical departments are of especial value, as they contain invaluable lists of directories, annuals, and other books suitable for this branch of library work. The handbooks issued by the Bristol, Liverpool and Southwark Public Libraries are the best of their kind.

Valuable assistance to book selectors for books on particular subjects are the lists issued by the National Book Council. These, of which there are now 150, cover a multitude of subjects compiled by experts and/or specialist librarians. Subject indexes are issued to facilitate the locating of reading lists on particular topics.

Special lists are issued by many American Public Libraries, and also bulletins by the New York, St. Louis and other libraries, and we should remember the "Reading with a purpose" series issued by the American Librarian Association. These consist of short guides to individual subjects followed by a select bibliography.

Below is given a selective list of bibliographies on special subjects—arranged according to the Dewey main headings. This is a selective list only, as a complete list would fill another book. The book selector should not overlook bibliographies included in many books and those given with articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Book lists issued by the B.B.C. in connection with their Talks programmes are also important. Not only do they include important books on a subject—chosen by experts—but the books listed are likely to be in demand by interested borrowers.

## GENERAL

Bibliographic Index : a cumulative bibliography of bibliographies. (H. W. Wilson Co. First published March, 1938.)

This is announced as a quarterly index, with annual and 5 year cumulations, to current bibliography including those published separately as books and pamphlets and those as parts of books and periodical articles.

Burton, Margaret, and Vosburgh, M. E. Bibliography of librarianship. (Library Association, 1934).

Cannons, H. G. T. Classified guide to 1,700 annuals, directories, calendars and year books. (Grafton, 1923.)

Library literature. (A.L.A., 1921 to date.)

National Book Council. A catalogue of books about books in the National Book Council Library. 3rd edn., 1938.

See also Minto, Mudge, Munford, and Shores ; Esdaile's *Students' manual of bibliography* (Allen and Unwin, 1931) ; Van Hosen and Walters' *Bibliography* (Scribner, 1928) ; McColvin's *Library stock* (Grafton, 1936) ; and Cowley's *The use of reference material* (Grafton, 1937).

## PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Baldwin, J. M. Dictionary of philosophy and psychology. 3 vols. Includes bibliography by Benjamin Rand, in vol. 3. (Macmillan, 1901-05.)

Board of Education. Subject list of books and papers in the Board of Education Library. No. 3 : Psychological tests (H.M.S.O., 1928.)

Bonny, H. V. The selection of books on psychology for the public library. (*Library Association Record*, 4th ser. vol. 2. pp. 149-52, 1935.)

Gunn, J. A. Psyche and Minerva : what to read in psychology and philosophy : a select bibliography. (O.U.P., 1933, 2nd ed.)

## RELIGION

Case, S. J. Bibliographical guide to the history of Christianity. (University of Chicago, 1931.)

Hastings, James, ed. Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics. 3 vols. (Clark, 1906-26.)

Reinach, S. Orpheus : a history of Religion. (Routledge, 1931.)

## SOCIOLOGY

Association for Education in Citizenship. Bibliography of social studies : a list of books for schools and adults. (O.U.P., 1936.)

Batson, H. E. Select bibliography of modern economic history. 1870-1929. (Routledge, 1930.)

Cambridge history of British foreign policy. (C.U.P., 1922-23, 3 vols.)

Eastman, M. H. Index to Fairy Tales, Myths, and Legends. (Boston, F. W. Faxon Co., 2nd edn., 1926.)

Eaton, Allen, and S. M. Harrison. A bibliography of social surveys: reports of fact-finding studies made as a basis for social action; arranged by subjects and localities. (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1930.)

Fabian Society. What to read on social and economic subjects. (Allen and Unwin, 6th edn., 1921.)

— More books to read. (Fabian Society, 1927.)

Gross, C. Bibliography of British municipal history. (Longmans, 1897.)

Headicar, B. M. Government publications (*Library Association Record*, monthly; and in ASLIB, Report of the Proceedings of the 13th Conference, pp. 83-91.)

Hiler, Hilaire, and Hiler, Meyer. Bibliography of costume. (H. W. Wilson Co., 1939.)

Holdsworth, W. S. Sources and literature of English law. (Clarendon Press, 1925.)

Lasswell, H. D., Casey, R. D., and B. L. Smith. Propaganda and promotional activities: an annotated bibliography. (University of Minnesota, 1935.)

League of Nations Library. Annotated bibliography on disarmament and military questions. (1931.)

The London Bibliography of the Social Sciences. (London School of Economics and Political Science, 1931-2, 4 vols. continued by supplements of which the first covers 1929-31.)

London School of Economics and Political Science. Calendar. Manwaring, G. E. Bibliography of British naval history. (Routledge, 1930.)

Maxwell, W. H. A bibliography of English law. (Sweet and Maxwell, 1926-1937, 5 vols. Vol. 1, to 1650, 1926; Vol. 2, 1651-1800, 1931; Vol. 3, 1801-1932, 1933; Vol. 4, Ireland, 1936; Vol. 5, Scotland, 1937.)

Munford, W. A. The Social Sciences in the public library. (*Library Association Record*, 3rd ser., vol. 3, pp. 201-07, 1934.)

Robertson, A. I. Guide to literature of home and family life. (Lippincott, 1924.)

Stevens and Sons, Ltd. Where to look for your law as set out in the latest legal textbooks. (4th edn., 1930.)

Zimand, S. Modern social movements: descriptive summaries and bibliographies. (H. W. Wilson Co., 1921.)

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Kennedy, A. G. Bibliography of writings on the English language from the beginnings of printing to 1922. (Milford, 1927.)

## SCIENCE AND USEFUL ARTS.

ASLIB. Select list of standard British scientific and technical books, 1937.

British Science Guild. Catalogue of British scientific and technical books. (3rd edn. 1930.)

City and Guilds of London Institute. Department of Technology Programme. (Current issue.)

Crane, E. J. and Paterson, A. M. Guide to the literature of chemistry. (Chapman, 1927.)

Mason, F. A. Introduction to the literature of chemistry for senior students and research students. (O.U.P., 1925.)

Roberts, A. D. Guide to Technical Literature : Introductory Chapters and Engineering. (Grafton, 1939.)

Zeitlinger, Heinrich, and Sotheran, Henry Cecil. Bibliotheca Chemico-Matematica ; Catalogue of works in many tongues on exact and applied science. (Sotheran, 1921. 2 vols.)

## MEDICINE

Osler, Sir William. Bibliotheca Osleriana : a catalogue of books illustrating the history of medicine and science. (O.U.P., 1929.)

## FINE ARTS

Blom, Eric. A general index to modern musical literature in the English language. (Curwen, 1927.)

Courtauld Institute of Art. Annual bibliography of the history of British art.

McColvin, E. R. Painting : a guide to the best books with special reference to the requirements of public libraries. (Grafton, 1934.)

McColvin, L. R. and Harold Reeves. Music Libraries : their organisation and contents with a bibliography of music and musical literature. 2 vols. (Grafton, 1937-38.)

There are also many excellent catalogues of music issued by public libraries, *e.g.*, Catalogue of Music in the Liverpool Public Libraries, 1933.

## LITERATURE

Baker, E. A., and Packman, James. A guide to the best fiction, English and American ; including translations from foreign languages. (Routledge, new edn., 1932.)



Cambridge history of English literature. (C.U.P., 1907-27, 15 vols.)

Crawford, J. R. What to read in English literature. (Putnam's, 1928.)

English Association. A reference library: English language and literature. (English Association, 1927.)

—— Year's work in English studies. (O.U.P. vol. 1, 1919-20, to date.)

Firkins, I. T. E. Index to short stories. (H. W. Wilson Co. 2nd ed. 1923. Supplement, 1929.)

—— Index of plays, 1880-1926. (W. H. Wilson Co., 1927; with supplement, 1935.)

Hyatt, A. L. Index to children's plays. (Based on plays for children: an annotated index, by A. I. Hazeltine. American Library Association, 1931.)

Kent, Violet, *ed.* The player's library and bibliography of the theatre. (Gollancz, 1930.) Supplement entitled "The player's library, 11." (British Drama League, 1934.)

Lanson, G. Manuel bibliographique de la littérature Française moderne, 1500-1900. (Paris: Hachette, new edn. containing "Littérature de la guerre," 1921.)

Marrot, H. V. A bibliography of the works of John Galsworthy. (Elkin Mathews and Marrot, 1928.)

Modern Humanities Research Association. Annual bibliography of English language and literature. (Bowes and Bowes, vol. 1, 1920, to date.)

Morgan, B. Q. Bibliography of German literature in English translation. (University of Wisconsin, 1922.)

Nairn, J. A. A hand-list of books relating to the classics and classical antiquity. (Blackwell, 1931.)

Nield, Jonathan. A guide to the best historical novels and tales. (Elkin Mathews and Marrot, 1929.)

Northup, C. S., *and others.* Register of bibliographies of the English language and literature. (Milford, 1925.)

Simone, C. H. A bibliography of John Masfield. (O.U.P., 1930.)

Smith, F. Seymour. The classics in translation. (Scribners, 1930.)

#### HISTORY

Adams, C. K. Manual of historical literature in English, French and German. (Harrap, 1889.)

American Historical Association and American Library Association. Guide to historical literature. (Macmillan, 1931.)

American Historical Association and Royal Historical Society of Great Britain. *Bibliography of British History*. (O.U.P., vol. 1, Tudor period, 1933 ; vol. 2, Stuart period, 1928.)

Bulkley, M. E. *Bibliographical survey of contemporary sources for the economic and social history of the war*. (Clarendon Press, 1922.)

Cambridge ancient history. (C.U.P., 1924-39, 12 vols., and 5 vols. of plates, etc.)

Cambridge history of India. (C.U.P., 1922-37, 6 vols.)

Cambridge history of the British Empire. (C.U.P., 1929-36, vols. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7.)

Cambridge medieval history. (C.U.P., 1911-36, 8 vols. and 1 vol. of maps.)

Cambridge modern history. (C.U.P., 1903-12, 13 vols. and atlas.)

Dutcher, G. M., *and others, eds.* *A guide to historical literature*. (Macmillan, 1936.)

Falls, Cyril. *War books : a critical guide*. (Davies, 1930.)

Gross, Charles. *Sources and literature of English history . . . to 1485*. (Longmans, 2nd edn., 1915.)

Harrison, H. G. *A select bibliography of English genealogy ; with brief lists for Wales, Scotland and Ireland*. (Phillimore, 1937.)

Historical Association. *Annual bulletin of historical literature*. (Hist. Assn., vol. 1, 1911, to date.)

Langer, W. L., *and* Armstrong, H. F. *Foreign affairs bibliography . . . books on international relations, 1919-32*. (Harper, 1933.)

Milne, A. T. *Writings on British history, 1935*. (Cape, 1939.)

Paetow, L. J. *Guide to the study of medieval history*. (Kegan Paul, 1931.)

Riches, P. M. *Analytical bibliography of universal collected bibliography*. (Library Association, 1934.)

Thomson, T. R. *Catalogue of British family histories*. (Beck, 2nd edn., 1935.)

Williams, J. B. *Guide to the printed materials for English social and economic history, 1750-1850*. (Columbia University Press, 2 vols., 1926.)

### AIDS TO CURRENT BOOK SELECTION

Aids to current book selection are usually of three kinds :

(a) Lists of new publications and new editions issued by publishers and booksellers.

(b) Reviews in book reviewing journals, newspapers, periodicals and in specialist journals.

(c) Lists of new and recommended books issued by societies, libraries, etc.

(a) *Publishers' Catalogues.*

These may be advance notices, catalogues of recent publications, prospectuses of individual books, or catalogues of books published on a particular subject or subjects. It is as well also to note publishers' advertisements in the press where often advance book news is given.

It should, however, always be borne in mind that the publisher issues his catalogue with the primary intention of selling his books, and whilst these catalogues, etc., are extremely useful in denoting and describing the contents of a book they should not be regarded as an unbiased evaluation of a book's worth.

These catalogues should be filed in boxes and arranged alphabetically according to publisher. It would be found very helpful indeed, *e.g.*, in dealing with readers' suggestions, if prospectuses and leaflets issued by publishers are filed in classified order.

(b) *Reviews.*

The principal weekly English book reviewing journal is the *Times Literary Supplement* in which the reviews are almost beyond reproach. They are authoritative and particularly free from prejudice. The names of the writers of the reviews are not given. The usual practice is to give detailed and comprehensive reviews of approximately fifty books and concise notes on some seventy more. These latter are arranged under broad subject headings in alpha-

betical order. Often a few books on a particular subject are grouped together for special review.

Next in order of merit comes the weekly *New Statesman and Nation*. This journal is the product of the merging, in 1921, of the *Athenæum*—which had been unrivalled since its establishment in 1828 as a literary journal—with the liberal paper, the *Nation*. Subsequently the *Nation and Athenæum* was merged with the labour paper, the *New Statesman*—hence its present title. In recent years the *Weekend Review* was merged with the *New Statesman and Nation*.

Of the quality of the reviews in this journal there can be no doubt, though they have a certain left wing bias. They are, for the most part, lively reviews written by professional reviewers, or men who have produced work of literary merit or specialists. They are different from the reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement* which are more conservative in tone.

Other weekly journals with sound book reviewing sections are *The Spectator* and *The Listener*.

Reviews in *The Spectator* are rather liberal in tone and a high standard is maintained. Reviews in *The Listener* are frequently by specialists and often include sound reviews of books on history and the fine arts which are not noticed in the *New Statesman and Nation*.

Several pages of reviews are included in the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer*, and whilst they are often the happy hunting ground of the library public, and for that reason should not be overlooked by the librarian, they are distinctly popular in flavour, particularly in the fiction sections, and the criticisms—or, often, lack of criticism—should be adjudged accordingly.

A monthly periodical with an excellent book reviewing section is the *London Mercury* edited by

Sir J. C. Squire. This incorporates the *Bookman*, which was merged with it in 1935. The reviews are of a high literary quality.

Two "quarterlies" are the *Criterion*, edited by T. S. Eliot, and the *Quarterly Review*. As may be expected the former is a fairly intellectual journal, whilst the latter is traditional and conservative in character. (As we go to press we learn that the *Criterion* is to be published no longer, and the *London Mercury* is to be merged with *Life and Letters To-day*.

Other journals which may be scanned are the *Fortnightly Review*, *Colosseum* (quarterly) and *Contemporary Review* (monthly).

The English librarian probably does not gain so much value from the American book reviewing periodicals as the American librarian gains from the English ones. This is due to a considerable extent to the fact that books are often published in England in advance of their being published in America.

The principal American weekly reviewing periodicals are the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Saturday Review of Literature*, and *Books*, the weekly book review supplement of the *New York Herald Tribune*.

The *Nation*, *The Survey Graphic* and the *New Republic* are weeklies with important book reviewing sections.

Many of the monthly journals also contain reviews. *Atlantic*, *American Mercury*, *North American Review*, and *Forum and Century* may be cited as typical of the best.

Quarterlies which contain authoritative reviews are the *American Historical Review*, *American Literature*, *Virginia Quarterly Review* and the *Yale Review*.

Whilst methods of considering the reviews are discussed in Chapter V, The Method of Book Selec-

tion, it may here be mentioned that the studying of reviews in several journals is almost, if not quite, as important as considering the reviews in any one particular periodical. By so doing we can obtain a comparative evaluation of the book, see points which another reviewer may have overlooked or not mentioned and generally be able to adjudge the suitability of the book for our library.

The lists of periodicals given above may be thought formidable, even though lists of specialist journals are not included, but they are the minimum necessary for our purpose. The quarterly journals are naturally published rather too late for the purposes of general book selection but they help us to achieve a valuable "finishing-off" to our job.

(c) *Lists issued by societies, etc.*

Guides and aids to current book selection issued by societies, associations, libraries and periodicals vary from the complete lists issued by the publishing trade to select lists of some 100 best books of the month issued by various libraries.

We will consider the trade bibliographies. In England, the *Bookseller* and the *Publishers' Circular* are issued weekly. They contain lists of all the books published in this country during the preceding week; and at the end of each month, complete monthly lists are given. From the lists given in the *Publishers' Circular*, which are arranged under authors and titles in one alphabet and are cumulative, the annual lists given in the *English Catalogue* are made.

A complete list, broadly classified, of books published each month is given in Whitaker's *Current Literature*. This consists of reviews of recently published books often including interesting articles such as

"Best books of the year," "Translations from the French," "India books," etc., followed by a complete list of recent publications, arranged alphabetically by subjects.

Complete lists of books published during the preceding three months are given in Whitakers' *Cumulative Book List*. They are given in the form of alphabetical class lists followed by an author-and-title index. The list is compiled from the weekly lists appearing in *The Bookseller*. These quarterly volumes are cumulative and from them the annual volumes mentioned above are made.

Select lists of new publications are given in two well-known monthlies devoted to library work—*The Library World* and *The Librarian*. In the former the titles are usually listed under the headings "Professional," "General" and "Fiction." The value of this list is enhanced by the annotations given which are descriptive rather than critical. An invaluable feature of this journal is *The Librarian's Guide to New Editions*. The value of this list is explained in the prefatory note: the "purpose is not only to bring together each month the titles of books recently revised, but to show to what degree, if any, these books have been changed." This list is alphabetical by author.

In *The Librarian* a select list of new publications is given under *The Best Books of the Month*. This list is classified according to the Dewey classification and annotations are given. Reference is usually made to the qualifications of the author and the scope of the work—would that all reviewers adopted the same purpose! There are also occasionally reviews of groups of books on special subjects, such as "Technical Books," "Annuals," "Art Books,"

etc., in this journal. The list of best books forms the basis of *Best Books of the Year* mentioned above, unless a still better book is published before the end of the year. The final selection is the work of experts in the particular subjects. This list of best books of the month is followed by *The New Novels of the Month* which consists of a list, arranged alphabetically by authors, of about twelve books. Lengthy annotations are given. A select list of new editions is also given, but they lack the comparative criticism and description given in the similar section in *The Library World*.

It is to be regretted that the Library Association does not as yet publish lists of best books. The Association of Assistant Librarians has inaugurated a monthly bulletin "Recommended Books" under the editorship of F. M. Gardner, F.L.A. This booklet contains between 30 and 50 titles each month. A small, descriptive, but breezy, note of 100-150 words in length, is given to each book. If not an actual guide this bulletin, which of course is intended to aid the library borrower in his choice of books rather than the book selector, is an extremely valuable check on our book selection. In passing may it be mentioned that it seems a pity that such excellent material is not cumulated into an annual list of best books. The cost to libraries for this bulletin, which may be resold to readers, is, at present, £3 10s. per 1,000 copies.

When the Library Association are considering their future policy it might be suggested that they issue a weekly or monthly guide to the best books compiled by experts in the particular subjects. Such a list should not be confined to books of a



purely cultural value alone as in "Recommended Books." Books on economics, science, technology, etc., should be included—man does not live by literature alone. Such a policy would surely enhance the prestige of the Library Association, and the profession as a whole, if a reliable publication such as this is produced. After all, the province of books, by which I mean the best books on subjects suitable for our public, are the means and ends of our existence. Our value to the community is more often than not judged by the book service. Such a book list would no doubt reduce the fun the librarian has in hunting and tracing books and reviews, but it would also reduce much time wasting effort.

Many library authorities publish monthly or quarterly select lists of new books. They are all useful as checks to our book selection. Small leaflets in neat folder form are issued by such libraries as Chesterfield, Dagenham, Finchley and Fulham. They each list about 60 books arranged under about six to nine broad headings, the heading often having a short, snappy title.

Other lists are too numerous to mention. They include that standard work amongst bulletins—the Croydon *Readers Index and Guide*, issued every two months, the Coventry *Bookshelf* and quarterlies issued by Middlesbrough, Portsmouth, Sheffield, etc.

An invaluable guide to the selection of commercial, scientific and technical books is the ASLIB booklist. This is published quarterly and covers the whole field of science and technology, except medical science. It was largely the product of the Annual Conference of ASLIB in 1934. At this Conference a number of papers on book selection were read. The voluntary

help of those intimately concerned with the new literature of diverse branches of science and technology was obtained and an experimental mimeographed edition published in March, 1935. Since then it has continued as a normally printed pamphlet of 25 pages, containing details of approximately 300 books. It is divided into :

- (a) General readers.
- (b) Intermediate books.
- (c) Advanced books.
- (d) Reference books, directories, dictionaries, etc.

Bulletins are also issued by many Commercial and Technical libraries such as Leeds, Liverpool, etc. A list of recent books added to the Sheffield Commercial, Science and Technology libraries is given in the quarterly bulletin of the City Libraries.

The leading American book-trade journal is the *Publishers' Weekly*. Founded in 1872, it contains, under a section entitled "Weekly Record of New Publications," a comprehensive weekly record of new books published in the United States. A short descriptive annotation is given for many of the books listed. Advance book news is included in its pages, and it contains many articles of interest and value to the Librarian. It is worthy of note that Graham's *Bookman's Manual* was first serialised in the *Publishers' Weekly*.

Another important American publication which should be checked for current book selection is the *Book Review Digest*. This has been described in detail above, but its monthly cumulative issues are a valuable aid in current book selection.

Since 1905 the American Library Association

has published a guide to the best books. The *Booklist*, as it is called, was issued ten times per annum at first, but since 1931 it has been published monthly. It is now a classified and annotated list of some 150-200 titles per month. Occasionally sections are devoted to short lists of books of topical interest. The annual supplements to the A.L.A. *Catalog* are largely based upon the monthly issues of the *Booklist*.

Technical books receive special attention in the *Technical Book Review Index*. This is published monthly except during July and August, by the Special Libraries Association under the editorship of L. Meixell. It was first published in September, 1935.

In the monthly *Wilson Bulletin for Librarians* there is a section entitled "Readers' choice of best books." This selection is intended for the use of the smaller libraries, and 20 books per month are listed in the manner of the *Book Review Digest*. The selection is made by the co-operation of a number of libraries. These lists are cumulated annually, but not more than 300 books are recommended in these annual supplements to the *Standard Catalog*, and if a more important book is published or if one is not as important as first thought it is included or rejected, as the case may be, in the annual supplement. Notes are given to each book.

Another important feature of the *Wilson Bulletin* is a section entitled "*The Book Preview*" giving a select annotated list of current and forthcoming books.

Many American libraries issue booklists and bulletins. The New York Public Library *Bulletin*, the St. Louis Public Library *Bulletin* and the Wisconsin Library Commission *Bulletin* are typical monthlies, whilst bulletins are also issued by the commercial

departments such as the monthly *Bulletin* of the Cleveland Public Library's Business Information Bureau.

#### CHILDREN'S BOOKS

For children's books one must be guided not only by the numerous guides mentioned in this chapter, but also by the various special guides devoted to the purpose. In selecting children's books, we must refer to the trade bibliographies, publishers' catalogues, and general bibliographies and reviews, but we must also utilise the special aids and guides to children's books.

We will not refer again to the English and American trade bibliographies, the selective catalogues, the *Book Review Digest*, etc., which have been described in detail above, but pass straight on to consider the special guides and aids to the choice of children's books. *Books for Youth*, though mentioned above, is specifically designed as a guide to children's books and is consequently a most valuable tool. The National Book Council, too, have issued several juvenile book lists. The latest list is "Books for Young People," 1937, ed. by K. Lines, and it includes lists of "Books for little children" and "Books for older boys and girls."

The most complete guide is *Twelve years of children's books*, 1939, compiled by J. G. Faraday. It is arranged alphabetically by authors, with subject and title indexes. Annotations consisting mostly of extracts from reviews are given to each entry.

The H. W. Wilson Co. have issued their *Children's Catalog* since 1909. Subsequent editions were published in 1917, 1925, 1930, and in 1936, the 5th edition which listed 4,100 books, 1,250 being marked for first purchase. The first supplement to the

5th edition was published in 1937 and a second supplement in 1938. It forms one of the *Standard Catalog* series issued by the H. W. Wilson Co., and includes :

1. Dictionary catalogue, with author, title and subject indexes.
2. Classified list according to Dewey, with full title, publisher, date and price.
3. List by grades.

Foreign juvenile literature in English translation is given in *Children's books from foreign languages* by R. A. Hill and Elsa de Bondeli (H. W. Wilson Co., 1937).

A classified list of some 1,500 books suitable for adolescent readers will be found in the appendix to *The Public Library and the adolescent*, by E. A. Leyland (Grafton, 1937). Whilst admirable in many respects it should be borne in mind that this is a list intended specifically for older children, but even then it seems that a number of books too advanced for adolescents are included; e.g., Adams' *Everyman's Psychology* and McDougall's *Energies of Men*. The travel sections are not well balanced. There are listed, for example, as many books on London as on the rest of England together.

Some libraries issue catalogues of children's books, and most give a list of new children's books added to the library in bulletins and other new booklists. Two of the best children's catalogues are *One Thousand Books for Boys and Girls* issued by the Dagenham Public Libraries in 1932, and *One Thousand and one Books for Boys and Girls*, 1930, published by the Sheffield City Libraries.

Derbyshire issue an annual list of the best children's books. The 1937-38 edition contained 220 titles,

annotated. American books were included, and some illustrated French and German publications.

Reviews of children's books require a considerable amount of tracking down. Many are noticed in the shorter notices given in the *Times Literary Supplement*. A unique juvenile book reviewing periodical is *The Junior Bookshelf*. It is published quarterly and is devoted solely to children's literature. It usually contains two or three articles on children's books in general followed by reviews of new publications. About a dozen books receive fairly detailed consideration—a review of approximately 250 words—followed by shorter notices (about 100 words) of some 100 titles.

Of recent years *The Junior Bookshelf* has issued an annual list of *Fifty good books for children*. Annotations are given, and of particular importance is the attention given to American books. For further information regarding American books, The American Library Association's lists of recent children's books are recommended. They usually include some 30 books, and are sold at the rate of one dollar per 100 copies.

#### REFERENCE BOOKS

There are five important guides to reference books :

(i) Minto, John. *Reference Books : a classified and annotated guide to the principal works of reference*, 1929 ; Supplement, 1931.

It is arranged according to the Dewey Decimal classification, and has an author and title index.

(ii) McColvin, L. R., and McColvin, E. R. *Library stock and assistance to readers*, 1936.

(iii) Cowley, J. D. *The use of reference material*, 1937.

The other two are American :

(iv) Mudge, I. G. *Guide to Reference Books*, 6th edn., 1936. It is classified chiefly by Dewey and has an author and title index. A list of 100 reference books is also included. It was formerly brought up to date yearly in the *Library Journal* for January, but this feature has now been discontinued. In January, 1938, a section entitled "Current Reference Books, edited by Louis Shores, commenced in the *Wilson Bulletin*.

(v) Shores, Louis. *Basic Reference Books : an introduction to the evaluation, study, and use of reference materials with special emphasis on some 200 titles*. Preliminary edition, 1937.

This edition is planographed and, as its title suggests, is an introductory course in reference work designed for students in the American Library schools. The author explains the use of reference books and also the use of the books which he lists. The entries are arranged first by form—dictionaries, encyclopædias, indexes, etc.—and then by subject.

For current books, English librarians will find Mr. Herbert Woodbine's articles on "Reference Libraries," published monthly in the *Library Association Record*, very useful.

#### FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN AND SPANISH LITERATURE

For French literature there is *La Librairie française*. 1st edition, Jan., 1930, with supplements to 1934.

*Bibliographie de la France* is a weekly record of French publications in classified form with author index ; and *Biblio* is a monthly list of books pub-

lished in French, and which are cumulated in an annual volume.

*Deutsche Nationalbibliographie* is a weekly record, from 1931, of German trade publications ; in classified form with cumulative author indexes. A fortnightly edition is devoted to publications of societies, institutions, etc.

*Tagliches Verzeichnis der Neuerscheinungen* is a daily supplement, arranged in alphabetical order by publisher, to the *Börsenblatt*.

The most accurate record of German books is *Halbjahrsverzeichnis der Neuerscheinungen* (formerly Hinrichs' *Halbjahrs katalog*), arranged alphabetically by authors and titles in one list, with a subject index.

*Deutsches Bücherverzeichnis*, 1911 to date, continues Kayser's *Vollständiges Bücherlexikon* which covers 1750 to 1910. It is an author catalogue with a subject index and is now issued every five years.

Italian publications are given in *Annuario bibliographia Italiano di diritto, economica e politica*, which was first issued in 1928 ; in *La Scheda Cumulativa Italiana* which is a quarterly and annual cumulative list of books published in the Italian language ; and in the weekly *Giornale delle Libreria*.

*Bibliografia general español e hispano-americana*, 1923 to date, is a monthly list of Spanish publications and which continues *Bibliografia española*, 1901-22.

A foreign books section is included quarterly in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Reviews of French, German, Italian and Scandinavian books are given, but the selection is very small and only some seven or eight novels and a similar number of non-fiction, in each language, are mentioned,



## GENERAL TRADE BIBLIOGRAPHIES

## ENGLISH

- Reference Catalogue of Current Literature.* (Whitaker.)  
*English Catalogue of Books.* (Publishers' Circular.)  
 Annually.  
*Cumulative Book List.* (Whitaker). Annually. Quarterly  
 cumulations.  
*Bookseller.* Weekly.  
*Publishers' Circular.* Weekly.  
*Current Literature.* (Whitaker). Monthly.

## AMERICAN

- Publishers' Trade List Annual.* (R. R. Bowker Co.)  
*United States Catalog.* (H. W. Wilson Co.) Kept  
 up to date by *Cumulative Book Index* published  
 monthly and cumulated annually.  
*Book Review Digest.* (H. W. Wilson Co.) Monthly—  
 annual cumulations.  
*Publishers' Weekly.* Weekly.

## SELECTIVE GUIDES

## ENGLISH

- Sonnenschein, W. S. *The Best Books: a Reader's  
 Guide.* 1910-35, 6 vols.  
 Library Association. *Books to Read*, 1930. Supple-  
 ment, 1931.  
*Books for Youth*, 1936.  
 Faraday, J. G. *Twelve years of Children's Books*, 1939.  
 Munford, W. A. *Three thousand books for a public  
 library.* 1939.  
 Philip, A. J. *Best Books of the Year*, 1929 to date.  
 Sections in *The Librarian* (monthly), *The Library  
 World* (monthly), and the *Library Review* (quarterly).

## AMERICAN

- A.L.A. *Catalog*, 1926. Supplement 1926-31, 1933.  
*Children's Catalog* (H. W. Wilson Co.) 5th edn.  
 1936. 2nd supplement 1938.  
*Standard Catalog* (H. W. Wilson Co.) 1934, annual  
 supplements.  
 Graham, Bessie. *The Bookman's Manual*. 1935, 4th  
 edn.  
 Dickinson, A. D. *The Best Books of the Decade*,  
 1926-1935. 1937.  
*Booklist* (monthly), *Wilson Bulletin* (section entitled  
*Standard Catalog Monthly*), the *Library Journal*  
 (monthly).

## REVIEWS

## ENGLISH

- |                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| <i>The Listener</i> .              | Weekly. |
| <i>New Statesman and Nation</i> .  | Weekly. |
| <i>Observer</i> .                  | Weekly. |
| <i>Spectator</i> .                 | Weekly. |
| <i>Sunday Times</i> .              | Weekly. |
| <i>Times Literary Supplement</i> . | Weekly. |

(A list of specialist papers which include reviews  
 is given at the end of Chapter V.)

- |                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Colosseum</i> .               | Quarterly.  |
| <i>Contemporary Review</i> .     | Monthly.    |
| <i>Fortnightly Review</i> .      | Bi-monthly. |
| <i>Life and Letters To-day</i> . | Monthly.    |
| <i>Quarterly Review</i> .        | Quarterly.  |

## AMERICAN

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| <i>Books (Supplement to New York<br/> Herald Tribune),</i> | Weekly. |
| <i>Nation</i> ,  | Weekly. |

<i>New Republic.</i>	Weekly.
<i>New York Times Book Review.</i>	Weekly.
<i>Saturday Review of Literature.</i>	Weekly.
<i>The Survey Graphic.</i>	Weekly.
<i>American Mercury.</i>	Monthly.
<i>Atlantic.</i>	Monthly.
<i>Forum and Century.</i>	Monthly.
<i>North American Review.</i>	Monthly.
<i>American Historical Review.</i>	Quarterly.
<i>American Literature.</i>	Quarterly.
<i>Virginia Quarterly Review</i>	Quarterly.
<i>Yale Review.</i>	Quarterly.

### REFERENCE BOOKS

- Cowley, J. D. *The use of reference material*, 1937.  
 McColvin, L. R., and McColvin, E. R. *Library stock and assistance to readers*, 1936.  
 Minto, John. *Reference Books*, 1929. Supplement, 1931.  
 Mudge, I. G. *Guide to Reference Books*, 6th edn., 1936.  
 Shores, Louis. *Basic Reference Books*. 1937.

### FRENCH BOOKS

- Biblio.* Monthly.  
*Bibliographie de la France.* Weekly.  
*La Librairie française*, 1930. Supplements, 1933, 1934.

### GERMAN BOOKS

- Deutsche Nationalbibliographie.* (New trade publications.) Weekly.  
 (New publications of societies, institutions, etc.) Fortnightly.  
*Deutsches Bücherverzeichnis*, 1911 to date.  
*Halbjahrsverzeichnis der Neuerscheinungen.*  
*Tägliches Verzeichnis der Neuerscheinungen* (Supplement to the *Börsenblatt*.) Daily.

## ITALIAN BOOKS

*Ammario bibliographia Italiano di diretto, economica e politica.*

*Giornale delle Libreria.* Weekly.

*La Scheda Cumulativa Italiana.* Quarterly.

## SPANISH BOOKS

*Bibliografia general española e hispano-americana, 1923 to date.* Monthly.

## CHAPTER III

### THE INDIVIDUAL BOOK

Editions, series, etc.—Translators.—Physical characteristics—binding, paper, type, etc.—Paper covered books.

#### EDITIONS, SERIES, ETC.

It is essential that the book selector be conversant with the meanings of the trade terms. Those in general use are given below.

*Edition.* The whole number of copies of a book printed and published at one time. A later printing from unchanged plates is another impression, issue or printing, which term is usually preceded by the number—first, second, etc.—of that impression, issue or printing. A second or further printing from the same plates may also be described as a reprint or reissue.

*New edition.* A new edition should be another printing of a book and with additions and/or emendations. The work should have been revised. Unfortunately, the term “new edition” is given frequently to what is only a new impression or issue.

*Limited edition.* The extra cost of limited editions and editions de luxe usually prevents their inclusion on the public library shelves. Occasionally they will be of value in the local collection or they might contain material, usually illustrations, not to be found in the ordinary edition. Occasionally, they

may demand a place upon the shelves, usually those of the reference library, by the actual merit of their subject matter and it is to be regretted that they are issued in a limited edition only.

*Series.* Books may be published in a series. Generally speaking there are two kinds of series :

- (i) Subject series.
- (ii) Publishers' series.

A subject series consists of series of books published on the same or related subjects. Sometimes they are called by the word "edition" or "library." Examples are the Cambridge County Geographies, the Highways and Byways series, the Loeb Classical Library, and the Hogarth Press series of Psycho-Analytical Monographs.

Publishers' series comprise books on various topics and produced in a uniform format. Among this class are the Everyman Library, the World's Classics, the Phoenix Library, the Traveller's Library, the Home University Library, Discussion Books, etc.

In selecting books in series, whether publishers' or subject series, due attention must be paid to the individual book. They may be new books, but are more frequently reprints. Books in series sometimes enable us to complete gaps in the book stock, but sometimes, too, the book included in a series is not the best obtainable on a particular subject. Hence the danger of buying a series *en bloc*. Another fault sometimes applicable to a series is that of size. They are not infrequently of a size which is too small to be desirable for public library use. Again the size may be too small with the result that the contents are cramped, reading is difficult or not so easy as it might be, and the margins are too small to admit of the trimming, etc., necessary for binding purposes.

On the other hand titles frequently included in a series are not to be found elsewhere and which, often classics, would otherwise be out of print. Again it may often be found advantageous to utilise books included in a series for replacement purposes. Also some publishers reprint fairly modern books in a series, a few years after publication, and at a reasonable price, such as Cape's Life and Letters series.

Sometimes authors' works are reprinted in the form of "sets." Again these must be evaluated according to individual circumstances. Sometimes they are definitely publishers' stunts to revive interest in and to sell little known titles. They may be so-called superior editions in a gaudy casing but on inferior paper and printed from badly-worn plates. On the other hand, however, they may be excellent sets, printed on good paper and in a suitable type, and generally neatly produced such as the first Collected Edition of the works of Mary Webb, published by Jonathan Cape.

#### TRANSLATORS

The book selector must continually be on the lookout for translations into English. Some translators, such as Aylmer Maude and Scott Moncrieff, have reached almost classic standing, whilst there are reputable contemporary translators, particularly in special subjects, such as Eden and Cedar Paul. Short of reading translated books it is obviously impossible to adequately judge their style. Moreover, we are in the perhaps unfortunate position of being unable to secure any other translation of a modern book than that put on the market by the copyright publishers. It seems redundant to state

this but I consider that it is particularly important that we represent foreign authors in English translation on our shelves, and if the translation is not so good as it might be I suggest we adopt the attitude of the pragmatist and purchase that translation rather than exclude the book from the library shelves.

#### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK

The parts and make-up of a book are discussed at length in McKerrow's *Bibliography*, and in Esdaile's *Introduction to Bibliography*, and the present author has attempted to lay a scientific foundation for the most appropriate and suitable format for a book in Chapter III of *Reading: an historical and psychological study*. (Gravesend: A. J. Philip, 1939.)

Obviously, we are at the mercy of the publishing world, and it is usually only in the case of reprints of older books, other things being equal, that we can discriminate and purchase the better produced book if our book fund will permit of this course.

Theorists on the ideal form in which a book should be produced often overlook two equally important factors. Firstly, the words used, and secondly the attitude of the reader. Whilst authors have no liability for the latter factor, they obviously have for the first. Word perception is an extremely important factor and, apart from certain literary forms, the prose should not be complex.

Some readers, too, have psychological objections to certain books, disliking their author, title, content, size, binding, colour of binding, type, etc. "Dislike" is perhaps not the correct term to use, for the average reader is rather repelled by or not interested in a certain book. The dislike does not appear as a dislike—it would possibly disappear if it did—but



remains in the unconscious. But these are subjects for further and separate investigation.

We will summarise the more important desirable physical characteristics.

*Size.* A uniformity of size amongst library books, however desirable in theory is obviously not practicable. Some books must be fairly large, say quarto, because of the illustrations they contain. We have already referred to the undesirability of including the very small book in the public library book stock. Generally speaking, for convenience the book should not be less than 6 inches nor more than  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height. Novels are usually produced in crown octavo (5 by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches), and much non-fiction in demy octavo (6 by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches). The smallest satisfactory pocket edition should measure  $4\frac{1}{2}$  by  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Suitability for the library shelves are not the only reasons for the sizes mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Ease of transport and legibility are also controlling factors.

*Binding.* New books are issued in what may be more correctly termed a publisher's casing and which in the ordinary course of events will stand 35—50 issues before library binding is necessary. So-called de luxe bindings and limp leather covers should be eschewed. Books issued in paper covers should be bound before use as otherwise the interior is liable to damage.

For library binding, cloth is the most suitable. Quarter or half leather and buckram (or a heavy cloth) may be used for bound volumes of periodicals and other large books. The binding should only be required to last the same life as the interior of a book and this simple reason makes leather unnecessary

for average binding purposes. The cloth should be bright, but not gaudy, and the colours should not run when exposed to the weather to a moderate degree.

The boards should be as light as possible, compatible with reasonable strength and freedom from warping.

The lettering should be neat, ornaments are usually superfluous.

Some binders specialise in a "facsimile binding" which approximates to the design of the publisher's casing. (For details of this and reinforced publisher's casings, see pp. 159-61.)

*Paper.* Art and other heavily loaded papers are most undesirable as also are many of the coarse, spongy, papers which are frequently used. The former are fairly heavy, glaring to the eyes, and brittle, whilst the latter are of poor durability. Pages of heavily loaded paper have a tendency to stick together when damp.

Paper should be light, yet strong, but not too thin. The specially thin paper used in the "omnibus" books is extremely valuable for its purpose, but though comparatively strong it is too easily damaged.

It is generally agreed that matt white paper is the most suitable for reading purposes.

*Type.* It is generally agreed that "old style" is the most legible variety of type. Regarding the use of lower case and capitals, although individual capital letters are generally more easily perceived than lower case, whole words are more easily perceived in lower case than in capital letters.

For the average book pica, 12 point, is the best size of type, with 7 point leading. Research has shown the importance of observing a correct ratio between the size of type and width of leading.

The length of line should bear a direct relationship between the size of the page and the size of the print. Small lines are best used when the type is small, as in the case of newspapers, periodicals, etc. The optimum line length is a matter on which authorities are not yet in agreement, but for 12 point type a line of between  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long is most easily read. We should bear in mind, however, that habituation is an extremely important factor, for we read most accurately and quickly a length of line with which we are most familiar.

Typographical eccentricity in books is to be avoided. We are most apt to prefer a type to which we are accustomed and which will lie quiescent and not interfere either by its brightness or its drabness with our comprehension of the text. Stanley Morison in *First principles of typography* has said, "Typography may be defined as the craft of rightly disposing printing material in accordance with specific purpose ; of so arranging the letters, distributing the space and controlling the type as to aid to the maximum the reader's comprehension of the text. Typography is the efficient means to an essentially utilitarian and only accidentally æsthetic end, for enjoyment of patterns is rarely the reader's chief aim. Therefore, any disposition of printing material which, whatever the intention, has the effect of coming between author and reader is wrong."

*Headlines.* Æsthetic considerations apart, headlines are of little value in novels, but I think their value warrants their inclusion in non-fiction books. It is usual for the headline on the left-hand page to indicate the brief title of the book and the headline on the right-hand page to give the title of the chapter or section of the chapter. Comparatively few non-

fiction books are read straight through, and the value of headlines to facilitate consultation purposes is obvious.

*Title page.* The information on the title page should be concise and confined to essentials. These are the name of the author and qualifications, and the title of the work ; and names of editors, translators, illustrators, or writers of introductions also should appear. The date should appear either on the recto or verso of the title page, together with any statement regarding the edition.

#### PAPER COVERED BOOKS

Paper covered books, as such, are obviously unsuitable for public library shelves, but in view of the very cheap reprints and particularly the new books and revised editions now being published, especially in the Penguin and Pelican series, they should be given serious attention. If the library requires the book it should be purchased and bound ; we should not approach the subject from a biased standpoint. Thus Shaw's *Intelligent woman's guide* in the Pelican edition contains a new chapter on fascism. The Penguin Specials contain such useful items as Wickham Steed's *The Press*. Spirax bindings are, of course, absolutely unsuitable for public library shelves but those we want, such as the Shell guides, should be purchased and bound. Mr. W. B. Stevenson has dealt at some length with this topic in "Strange birds," published in *The Librarian*, vol. 28, No. 7, pp. 176-177.

## CHAPTER IV

### FACTORS IN BOOK SELECTION

The library system.—The library public and the community survey.—Proportions of stock.—Financial considerations.

Book selection is a task which, if it is to be done at all efficiently, must be planned. That formal planning is necessary becomes obvious when we suggest that we must plan for suitable distribution of the new books bought for each library and department.

This distribution must, of course, be :

- (a) according to the respective requirements of the departments ;
- (b) according to the more specific needs of the population served ;
- (c) in accordance with the balance of stock ; that is, the books should bear some relationship to a fairly definite set of percentages indicating the proportion of the main classes to the total book stock, and which proportions must always be in relation to the type of population which the library serves ;
- (d) planned in accordance with certain financial considerations.

#### THE LIBRARY SYSTEM

In the planning of book selection it is essential that we know the aim and purpose of that selection.

As there are 17,000 new books, not to mention reprints and new editions, published annually in the British Isles alone, it is obvious that the performance of this selection is no mean task. As has so often been remarked, book selection for public libraries resolves itself into a selection within a selection.

To ascertain the aim of book selection it is necessary for the librarian to envisage both the library system under his control and the public which it serves. The public library service in England is conducted both by urban and county library authorities. The former may vary from the small town library to a large city library system with a central library, containing lending, reference and commercial departments, and branch libraries. We must therefore draw up a schedule of the libraries and departments.

### URBAN LIBRARIES

A large urban library system will consist of something like the following :

#### CENTRAL LIBRARY

##### *Adult Lending Library*

- (a) General.
- (b) Special collections ; music, foreign literature, etc.
- (c) Pool stock.

##### *Children's Library*

- (a) General home reading.
- (b) Reference section.

##### *Reference Department*

- (a) General. (Open shelf.)
- (b) Stack Room.

- (c) Special sections.
  - (i) Local collection.
  - (ii) Commercial, Scientific and/or Technology libraries.
  - (iii) Other special collections.

*News and periodical room*

#### BRANCH LIBRARIES

- (a) General.
- (b) Reference collection.
- (c) Children's department.
- (d) News and periodical room.

Some urban libraries may also include a school library service and delivery stations.

#### COUNTY LIBRARIES

Book selection for a county library system will require consideration of and provision for the following departments :

##### HEADQUARTERS

- (a) Pool stock. (Books in hand to work the exchange—not to be confused with an urban library pool stock of little used books.)
  - (i) Adult.
  - (ii) Children's.
- (b) Students' collection.
- (c) Special collections.

##### MAIN OR REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARIES

- (a) Adult lending department.
- (b) Children's lending department.
- (c) Adult reference department.

- (d) Children's reference collection.
- (e) Special collections, *e.g.*, music, local (history and local industries).
- (f) News and periodical room.

#### SUB-BRANCH LIBRARIES

- (a) Adult lending department.
- (b) Children's lending department.

#### DELIVERY STATIONS AND/OR LIBRARY VAN General.

#### SCHOOL LIBRARIES

- (a) General.
- (b) Reference collection.

### THE LIBRARY PUBLIC AND THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

We have also to consider the public which the library serves. Whilst in many cases the librarian bases his selection, in non-fiction, on what experience and experiment tell him his public requires, in many cases that selection is based upon the personal interests and feelings of the librarian concerned. He acts in all good faith, but the selection, even though magnificent from some points of view, is of necessity a purely arbitrary one. In America, research is being conducted with a view to enabling the librarian to conduct his book selection on a scientific basis when it comes to relating that selection to the public which it is to serve. It is done by means of the "community survey."

A full discussion on and explanation of the community survey is to be found in *Book Selection: its principles and practice*, by Dr. J. H. Wellard (Grafton, 1937). Dr. Wellard points out that it is of little



value picking out certain people and noting that they read, or have read, books by classified authors. He says : " this handpicking of remarkable instances does not give a true picture of the state of reading in any community. To do this, all classes of readers must be investigated, and these classes or groups classified according to characteristics as homologous as possible. By general agreement, the most satisfactory categories are sex, education, occupation, age, with other definite group characteristics, if they can be objectively defined."

It is obvious that by investigation on these bases we should be able to discover the reading interests of the library users—and this is essential for a soundly organised system of book selection.

Dr. Wellard continues : " The second stage, after investigating what percentage of the whole population are serious and habitual readers and what percentage of these make use of the library, will be to discover what social groups are found among the library's actual users ; and how they compare numerically with the other groups in the community. *The comparison will be one objective standard of service.* For if the library patronage is truly representative of the whole community, the service can be claimed to be democratic ; but *if the discrepancy is great, the service must be judged inadequate in this respect.*" (The italics are mine.)

In all, Dr. Wellard postulates seven questions for investigation. " The questions are :

1. What proportion of the population of any given community uses the public library ?
2. What social groups do these users belong to ?
3. What sources of reading are there in the community other than the public libraries ?

4. What subjects are most read ?
5. What subjects are of most interest ?
6. What groups and individuals read what books ?
7. What titles are most read, and by whom.

The contention is that an investigation of these aspects of reading, both within and without the library, will provide the librarian and book selector with a far more comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the place of literature in his community than his present intuitive judgment can provide. It is further contended that the objective data obtained from a community survey will logically suggest certain generalised methods of book selection, methods which may be modified according to the requirements of particular cases."

In Chapter XII of Dr. Wellard's book will be found a description of the methods of community survey. He discusses the research necessary, and the method of executing it to investigate the seven questions given above. He describes the types of questionnaire necessary, and the charts and tables which can be used for classifying the data thus obtained. In conclusion, he points out the value of "a triple comparison . . . made between what subjects are most available ; what subjects are most read ; and what subjects are of most interest."

This relationship between the Book Collection, Actual Reading, and Reading Interest, may be determined by means of a graph (see next page).

"No amount of assumption could explain away a great discrepancy between the three curves [if plotted in graph shown] . . . , if they were plotted from objective data. No excuses, that is, for a lack of any positive relationship between the library's

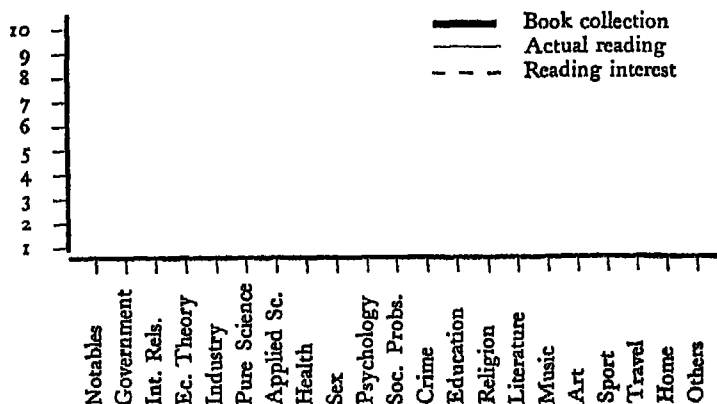


FIG. 1.—Comparisons between Book Collection, Actual Reading, and Reading Interest.<sup>1</sup>

collection, its actual use, and readers' real requirements, would be acceptable. If there is no such relationship the library service must be judged inadequate . . ." The librarian will then be able to improve his book stock, "for if he knows what groups use the library, what they do read, and what they would read if they could, he is in possession of certain incontrovertible arguments upon which to base a reasonably sound book selection policy."

N.B.—Dr. Wellard concludes this chapter with the proviso that there are two other factors to be taken into consideration :

1. "The nature of the book."
2. "The function of the library."

<sup>1</sup> No attempt has been made in this figure to put in hypothetical curves. The scale used on the vertical axis would be based on a common denominator of the three factors involved. If the digits represent hundreds of books in the case of the stock and the actual reading, interest values would have to be a rough estimate in terms of the 1-10 scale. Thus :

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No interest		Average interest				Great interest				

## PROPORTIONS OF STOCK

Some proportions must also be evolved to keep the balance of stock at each of the libraries and departments. The importance of this is obvious if we consider, for example, the predominance which might be given to a certain subject merely because of the librarian's interest therein. The proportions should be twofold—according to library and according to subject. A check must be kept on the number of books going to each department and library, and we should be careful to note that the selection is representative and that no subject unduly predominates except for purely local reasons.

This presupposes the existence of percentages which act as norms for this purpose. Local circumstances will play a considerably part in the formulation of these figures. These circumstances may, of course, be investigated by means of the community survey described earlier in this chapter. The numbers and types of library vary from one district to another as well as the reading tastes and interests, and one must bear in mind these factors when discussing the percentages.

Such variations will, however, be slight. Indeed, if one analyses the stocks of libraries established in post war years a remarkable similarity will be noticed. This similarity extends also to the non-fiction issues of the libraries concerned. The variations will be in individual topics rather than main subject headings. Experience points to a decrease in the Sociology and Useful Arts classes in libraries in middle class residential areas as compared with libraries in more working class and in industrial districts. Again, in libraries in middle class residential areas books on Religion,

Literature, Fine Arts, and History are usually in greater demand than in the other districts. In all districts there is a noticeable lack of interest in books on Pure Science. People do not seem particularly interested in Geology and such-like topics to-day. This attitude may be contrasted with the percentages given in Brown's *Manual* where Science is considered to be of equal value to Useful Arts and to be of more importance than Fine Arts.

Bearing in mind, therefore, these conditions we may postulate the following percentages as being typical of the stock for a modern lending library.

				per cent.
Class 000	General Works	..	..	.2
100	Philosophy	..	..	2.0
200	Religion	..	..	2.0
300	Sociology	..	..	5.5
400	Philology	..	..	.5
500	Science	..	..	3.5
600	Useful Arts	..	..	7.0
700	Fine Arts	..	..	6.3
	Music	..	..	2.0
800	Literature	..	..	10.0
900	History and Travel	..	..	11.0
	Biography	..	..	5.0
	Fiction	..	..	45.0

In the Reference collection, the most noticeable increase will be in general works ; and the absence of fiction, except for the classics, will result in a corresponding increase in the other sections. The following table indicates the distribution of the main classes :

				per cent.
Class 000	General Works ..	..	..	12
100	Philosophy ..	..	..	3
200	Religion ..	..	..	5
300	Sociology ..	..	..	10
400	Philology ..	..	..	2
500	Science ..	..	..	7
600	Useful Arts ..	..	..	11
700	Fine Arts ..	..	..	10
800	Literature ..	..	..	13
900	History and Travel ..	..	..	21
	Biography ..	..	..	6

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Naturally, all book selection must be done in relation to the supply of money available and in relation to the libraries and departments served. The question of discount is dealt with in Chapter XIII "The Organisation of Book Purchase."

The amount of money available for book purchase each month should be calculated, and in the book list prepared for the Committee the total cost of books given should conform approximately to this. It is bad management, and not very good policy, to spend all the money available one or two months before the end of the financial year, for obviously such practice results not only in complaints from readers through delay in receiving new and important books and a sudden cessation of the library's life blood to the shelves, but also it usually means the inadequate representation of books published during the period in question. If all the book fund is used up one month before the end of the financial year it will mean that during the first month of the new year either one month's money will have to suffice for the selection of two months' books—the book-selection

being skimmed—or that we purchase all the books desired, and at the end of the financial year we are consequently in the same predicament as before. Of course, it should be borne in mind that the quality of the books published one month is not necessarily comparable to that of those published in another month, and that there are “peak” publishing periods and some difference in the expenditure per month must vary, but usually the law of averages holds good and the variation is slight.

The proportion of the annual library budget devoted to the purchase of books must vary considerably between libraries. In a county library system the percentage is usually rather high, but this does not presuppose a good book fund, but rather that the staff is inadequate, underpaid and supplemented by voluntary labour. Again, one library may have high loan charges whilst another may not.

Whilst it is generally assumed that approximately 15 per cent. of the annual income should be devoted to book purchase, and 5 per cent. to newspapers and periodicals, in an urban library system, we obviously cannot in any way be dogmatic on this point. The present writer considers that 5 per cent. for newspapers and periodicals is far too high, but that is a very controversial question. Whilst the book fund allocation is in nearly every instance far too small, there should be no justification for raising that to the disadvantage of the funds devoted to binding, maintenance, staff salaries, etc. In most cases they, too, are insufficient and we should aim, whilst eliminating waste and preventing undue importance being attached to any branch of the service which does not merit it, rather at a general raising of standards than impoverishing one in order that another may benefit.

## CHAPTER V

### THE METHOD OF BOOK SELECTION

Current Book Selection.—Book Reviews.—Staff Book Committee.—Readers' suggestions.

As this work is intended for English librarians and students the "tools" mentioned as incidental in the method of selection will be predominantly English, but the same principles will, to a large extent, apply to American libraries also. The chief difference will, of course, be the transposing of English for American "tools." Thus, for instance, where the English librarian uses *The Bookseller*, the American librarian will employ the *Publisher's Weekly*. This is only generally speaking, of course, for occasions must arise when we use both English and American "tools" of the same nature, or use an American "tool" of which there is no comparable example in England, *e.g.*, the *Book Review Digest*.

#### CURRENT BOOK SELECTION

There are two sources of recommendation whereby books are added to the library. They are from :

1. Librarian and staff.
2. Readers.

One might add a third source—recommendations from the Libraries Committee (or Books Sub-Committee).



tee). Again, books may be added in response to requests from societies and educational organisations (such as W.E.A.) in connection with class work.

All book selection method must necessarily be dependent upon the size and resources of the library. The library serving a population of 50,000 will obviously not require such an extensive book selection policy as that of a library serving a population of 500,000. In the smaller library there will be less provision in the book fund for any mistakes to be made, and the selection will have to be far more selective than that of the larger library. In this chapter, however, we will study the methods applicable to the larger library and technique for the smaller libraries may be modified accordingly.

Publishers' catalogues and prospectuses and the lists in the *Bookseller*, which latter represent the entire publishing output during the previous week, must be checked, and books on subjects with which the library is chiefly concerned noted and purchased on approval or kept for consideration when reviews appear. They may be noted upon 5 by 3 inch cards ruled somewhat as shown on p. 71.

The particulars mentioned on the card may be completed as and when the information becomes available. Larger libraries with a dozen or so departments and branches may find it convenient to print initials representing same after the word "Libraries" and tick or underline those for which copies of the book have been ordered.

Reviews which have been read may be referred to in the appropriate space and probably a sign given whether the review was favourable or otherwise. Cuttings from periodicals and other notes may be attached to or written on the back of the card. A

Ordered		Author	
Vendor		Title	
Date rec'd.		date	price
Cost		pub'r.	
Notes		edn.	
		Libraries	
		Review	
		Recom'd. by	
		Nothing on subject	Similar
		Report on by	Continuation
		Approved	Rep.
Date of Comm.		Second-hand	Deferred
		Disapproved	

FIG. 2.

note may be made of the librarian's decision if the order is to wait until second-hand copies are available.

It is useful to retain cards for books which have not received a favourable review in case of an enquiry at a later date, in which case the information will be at hand.

The date on which the book was ordered and the date of receipt may be entered together with the name of the bookseller. Routine connected with this will consist chiefly of keeping files of these cards, such as :

1. Under consideration.
2. Sanctioned by Librarian (*i.e.*, now to be passed by Committee).
3. Passed by Committee.
  - (a) Immediate purchase.
  - (b) Deferred purchase.
4. Ordered.
5. Received.
6. Overdue.

The ~~most~~ convenient arrangement within the division is alphabetical by author, though in the "ordered" file some librarians might find it convenient to arrange them under the name of the bookseller. It will also be necessary at some time during the process to arrange the cards in classified order to keep the balance of stock.

The "notes" column may be used as and when necessary—it is useful for example to mention if the book is of reinforced or facsimile binding. Other libraries might find it convenient to add the accession or order numbers in this space.

This card may be adapted for further use as an

Accession or Union catalogue card. A dual purpose withdrawals and replacement order card is described in Chapter XV.

### BOOK REVIEWS

Next in order of occurrence will probably be the reviews in the various book reviewing and other periodicals described in Chapter II. These must be studied and a selection made and noted on the type of card mentioned above. This work will mostly resolve itself into noting the date and place of the review, and whether it was favourable or not as the titles will already have been gleaned from the trade bibliographies.

It is important, too, that reviews in specialist periodicals, such as *Nature*, *Engineering*, etc., be studied, and a list of the more important specialist periodicals is given at the end of this chapter.

Broadly speaking, reviews of books appear in the popular press, in book reviewing periodicals, and sections devoted to books in literary journals and in specialist periodicals. There are also reviews in trade publications, both generally and in the catalogues of individual publishers.

This is the material which has to be sifted by the librarian. But to what extent can we rely upon the book review as a guide and aid to book purchase? The mass of book reviews are devoted to what is described as general literature (fiction, literature, travel, biography), and to a selection of books on political science and political aspects of current problems according to the political tendencies and leanings of the journal. These are mostly contributed by professional reviewers and journalists. Such reviewers have to contribute to making their paper

readable and saleable. The readers of the popular press do not want to read reviews which dissuade them from reading the book in question. Hence the "discoveries" which many reviewers make. As librarians we are aware of this practice, but we are also aware that these are a fertile source of borrowers' suggestions.

The librarian will find the best reviews for his purpose in the second type—literary journals. These apply, of course, mostly to general literature. Experience and general knowledge will guide him to the attitude of the journal, and which attitude is usually reflected in the review, and the type of book reviewed. The review to-day differs to a marked degree from those of fifty or so years ago. Then the incidence of a book to review gave the reviewer the opportunity to provide, after treating summarily with the book in question, with a disquisition on his views on the subject with which the book dealt. The reviewer did tell his readers something of positive value. But to-day much reviewing is of negative value. An author's thesis or facts may be decried or questioned. The reviewer may tell us where he disagrees with an author, but rarely is any constructive criticism forthcoming. Again, the review may be too subjective rather than objective. It is most unnatural, and unhealthy, for a reviewer not to possess bias, but it is also unhealthy for it to operate violently, and for the reviewer to think along deep, narrow grooves.

The most honest reviewing is usually that found in specialist periodicals, but that, too, often suffers by having a negative value, as indicated in the preceding paragraph. But we should beware, however, of purchasing a book on what has been des-

cribed "the strength of a long and laudatory review in a specialist periodical." The book may well deserve the review—but will the book be read by our public? That is the question which we must always ask ourselves when dealing with this class of review.

Mr. Frank M. Gardner has published an invaluable survey of contemporary reviewing practice in *The Library Association Record*, Vol. 40, pp. 158-160. He distinguishes between "book-reviewing" and "literary criticism"—"when reviewing becomes a creative art, it turns into literary criticism" and "Book reviewing is intended only to inform; criticism to edify."

Mr. Gardner continues by pointing out the importance of reviews to the publisher, for advertisements alone will not sell books—the advertisement must be backed-up by appreciative reviews. The reviewer is "the vital link between publisher and purchaser." Five requirements are enumerated as being desirable features of book reviews. They are:

1. *Selection.* Obviously no periodical could give reviews of all books published but the selection given should be "careful and deliberate." This applies more to general journals—not those which set out to review books of a special class or tendency.

2. *Accuracy.* Perspective: "reviewing in the light of other works on the same subject."

3. *Promptness.* "Perhaps, a minor point" but topicality is often important these days, but in any case there are new editions and second-hand copies to consider.

4. *Brevity.* Autobiographical details, long-windedness, and dissertations by the reviewer should be eschewed.

5. *Value.* Evaluation. The criticism should be sound, instead of the "tradition of polite platitudes and quotable bits."

Monthly checks should be made by reference to the list given in Whitaker's *Current Literature*, reviews in monthly journals and annotated lists of best books of the month in library journals such as *The Library World* and *The Librarian*; remembering, of course, the valuable list and evaluation of new editions given in the former periodical.

Quarterly reviews and booklists will largely be utilised for keeping a further check on the book selection. In the quarterly journals one can often find longer reviews or reviews of books which have escaped the notice, or have received small notice, in the weeklies and monthlies. A more considered reviewing opinion may be found in the quarterly. A useful checklist is "Best books of the quarter" given in the *Library Review*.

Occasional booklists received by the library should also be checked. They may be :

1. Specifically intended as guides for the book selector (*e.g.*, ASLIB quarterly *Booklist*).

2. Lists issued by societies and educational organisations as addenda to syllabuses, etc. (*e.g.*, Talks programmes issued by the B.B.C., W.E.A. and University Extension class syllabuses).

3. Library publications. These, issued monthly, quarterly, or as guides to particular subjects, are valuable lists for checking purposes, representing as they do the verdicts of other libraries upon books. Lists issued by special libraries are of considerable value in that they frequently contain material not reviewed in the usual channels.

Publishers' catalogues should be utilised as they often contain advance information, details of new editions, etc. They should, of course, always be used with a certain modicum of the reserve and understanding necessitated by their being catalogues designed to help the sale of books mentioned therein.

It is not usual for library journals in England to contain lists of forthcoming books, except in the form of book notes in the *Library Review* and elsewhere. The *Wilson Bulletin*, however, contains "*The Book Preview*" which is a select classified list of current and forthcoming books, and similar lists are also given in the *Library Journal*.

As a round-off to our sources of book selection we should study the annual lists and reviews of best books given in most book reviewing journals and the many annotated lists published by other libraries.

We should bear in mind, too, that reviews may be checked in the monthly *Book Review Digest* though a period must necessarily elapse before the books are included in this publication. Indicating, as it does, a consensus of reviewing opinion on individual books it is of particular value when considering readers' suggestions and when adding to or strengthening a particular subject, or when selecting books for particular objects, such as study circles, lectures and educational organisations.

American practice will be similar to that described above except that, obviously, American trade catalogues and reviewing periodicals must be substituted for English ones. In addition the American Library Association publishes the *Booklist* monthly, giving about 150-200 titles per month, annotated, and arranged in classified order. Another selective guide is that published by the H. W. Wilson Co.



entitled the *Standard Catalog*. This is an annual publication containing not more than 300 titles and based on the *Standard Catalog Monthly* (which appears in the *Wilson Bulletin*) and which lists about 20 books per month, with annotations. It should be observed that English books are frequently published in America with different titles to the English edition, and vice-versa. Thus, Vernon Bartlett's *This is my life* appeared in the U.S.A. as *Intermission in Europe*.

#### STAFF BOOK COMMITTEE

The actual book selecting personnel also will depend to a great extent upon the size of the library system. In the large library this will probably be the job of the deputy librarian, whilst it may even be delegated to departmental heads under the general control of a co-ordinating officer, whilst in the small library all book selection will be done by the chief librarian himself.

The usual practice in America seems to be that selections are based upon the recommendations of the staff (*i.e.*, those in charge of particular departments and branch librarians) who sit in committee once a week. Members of this book selection committee, as it is called, search the book world for new publications suitable for their particular department or library, and it is the purpose and function of the committee to approve or disapprove of that selection. Of course, vetoing powers are vested in the chief librarian.

In England the most favoured practice is for the librarian or deputy librarian to do the work of the book selection aided by suggestions from members of the staff who have charge of particular departments or who have special interests or qualifications in

certain subjects. There can be no doubt that a staff book selection committee involves the spending of a considerable amount of time in discussion and argument. The importance of book selection should not be minimised nor can it easily be over-rated, but it is unlikely that a committee of specialists would indulge in unimpassioned argument.

The best method would be for suggestions on book purchase to be sent in at regular intervals, preferably weekly, by :

(a) Assistants in charge of special departments, *e.g.*, children's librarians, librarian in charge of commercial, science and technology libraries, branch librarians, reference librarian, etc.

(b) Members of the staff interested in special subjects. For example, one member (or even more than one) should be deputed to cover economics, another psychology, another poetry, and so on.

Suggestions should be forwarded to the chief or deputy librarian or assistant responsible for the book selection. The suggestions should preferably be noted on 5 by 3 inch cards similar to the specimen given on p. 71 and giving the following information :

1. Author, title, publisher, date, edition.
2. The date and place of review.
3. The nature and opinion of the review.
4. Brief reasons for adding the book to the library, noting if there is nothing on this subject in stock.

In the case of non-fiction it would be very useful to include under no. 4 the author's qualifications, and the scope of the book, but unfortunately these are not always given in reviews. Reference should

certainly be made to similar books in the library, if any, and whether the book in question gives further information or is an augmentation of information.

By these means the librarian will be able to call all the resources of his staff into play—the staff who are working amongst the people by whom the books are to be read. It is admittedly very difficult for the book stock not to represent the prides and prejudices of the librarian, but by receiving suggestions from members of the staff as outlined above he is aiming at catholicity in book selection. One word of warning should be included. The specialist is only too apt to think of his subject as the most important, and to recommend books out of proportion to the needs and mentality of the library users. It is for the co-ordinating officer to keep a check on this.

It is very desirable to recruit specialists (from universities, factories, etc.) who can give opinions on books. Such specialists should act only in an advisory capacity—when asked by the librarian. The information we should seek to elicit from a specialist is whether a book is sound and its degree of complexity, and the librarian himself should decide whether it is suitable for his public.

#### READERS' SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions from users of the library should always be encouraged and receive the attention they deserve in that they reflect an actual demand and suggest a weakness in the book stock. Notwithstanding they should always be evaluated in terms of the actual book and its probable value to the community.

Unless the book in question has been published very recently an idea of its importance may be gained by reference to the *Book Review Digest* or the

*United States Catalog.* Unless it is a request for a purely ephemeral type of book we should consider the other books on the same subject and decide whether the suggested book contains additional information. It may be more advanced or it may contain more recent research, enactments, etc., on the subject. In the case of ephemeral literature it will often be found advisable to defer the purchase until the book can be bought second-hand.

Whilst the suggested book may satisfactorily fulfil the criteria mentioned above, the request might be an isolated one and there might be little justification for purchasing a book on a specialised subject or of an advanced nature for the use of one borrower. In this case we should consider whether it is to be borrowed through the Regional Library Bureau.

### AIDS TO CURRENT BOOK SELECTION

Book reviews will be found in the following periodicals :

N.B.—This list is confined to English periodicals. A list of American periodicals is given in Drury's *Book Selection*.

#### PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

British Journal of Psychology.  
Hibbert Journal.  
Journal of Philosophical Studies.  
Mind.

#### RELIGION

British Weekly.  
Catholic Times.  
Church Quarterly Review,  
Church Times,

Dublin Review.  
Evangelical Quarterly.  
Expository Times.  
Inquirer and Christian Life.  
Journal of Theological Studies.  
Tablet.

## SOCIOLOGY

*General*

Sociological Review.

*Economics*

Economica.  
Economic History Review.  
Economic Journal.  
Economist.

*Education*

Journal of Education.  
Schoolmaster.  
Teachers' World.  
Times Educational Supplement.

## SCIENCE

Annals of Applied Biology.  
Ibis.  
Journal of Ecology.  
Nature.  
Science Progress.

## MEDICINE

British Medical Journal.  
Lancet.

## USEFUL ARTS

Analyst.  
Architect and Building News.

Contractors' Record.  
Electrical Trades Journal.  
Engineer.  
Engineering.  
Flight.  
Metallurgia.  
Municipal Journal.  
Popular Gardening.

## FINE ARTS

Apollo.  
Architectural Review.  
Burlington Magazine.  
Connoisseur.  
Studio.

## MUSIC

Monthly Musical Record.  
Musical Times.  
Music and Letters.

## LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Journal of Philology.  
The Times Literary Supplement, and the general periodicals—New Statesman and Nation, Spectator, Life and Letters To-day, etc., will be of most use here. These journals contain reviews on most subjects except scientific and technical.

## HISTORY AND TRAVEL

English Historical Review.  
Geographical Journal.  
History.  
Journal of Historical Studies.  
Journal of Roman Studies.  
Scottish Geographical Magazine.

## CHAPTER VI

### BOOK SELECTION FOR LENDING LIBRARIES

Scope of stock.—Non-fiction.—Fiction.—Particular subjects.—  
Books for the blind.—National and local influences.—  
Duplication.—Censorship.—Conclusion.

#### SCOPE OF STOCK

WE have seen in Chapter I that we should stock our libraries first by range then by appeal. This applies especially to the lending department. We should be prepared for readers who require books on almost any subject, yet catering for our local borrowers who may have certain well-defined interests. These interests can be discovered only as the result of experience—either by actual work and enquiry within the library or by the community survey, which latter is described in Chapter IV. Whilst the former may be arbitrary, it must be admitted that not all libraries have the machinery, wherewithal or inclination to institute a community survey.

Generally speaking, then, we should aim at representing as many subjects as reasonably possible; conditional, of course, upon the size and resources of our library; and including standard works on the more important subjects.

Of course, we must steer between the Charybdis of filling our shelves with erudite treatises and the Scylla of filling them with merely popular books. But it must be admitted that a moderate number of

standard works gives a certain "tone" to the library. Thus, we should possess books like McDougall's *Social Psychology*, Marshall's *Principles of Economics*, Fletcher's *History of Architecture*, and so on. Examples in literature are legion. We must have the works of the classic poets, dramatists, novelists and essayists, and the standard literary histories by such people as Stopford Brooke, Compton Rickett, Legouis and Cazamian, and Saintsbury.

The inclusion of this standard stock need in no way predominate over the general stock. In fact all the books should form part of a coherent whole designed to serve student, general reader, and the borrower who just wants "a good book." The standard stock included should never be dead and lie idle on the shelves. Though, in actual practice, books such as those suggested above are in frequent if not constant demand. More often, it is the popular and topical book which has grown out of date that is found lying idle on so many public library shelves. Many librarians, too, do not realise the importance of discarding out-of-date books on technical and scientific subjects and their replacement by modern works.

#### NON-FICTION AND FICTION

The book stock of a lending library is divided somewhat arbitrarily into non-fiction and fiction. Although it is considered advisable for about 45 per cent. of the lending library stock to be fiction and the rest non-fiction, these percentages are not represented by like proportions in the issue figures. The percentage of non-fiction issues may vary from 10 per cent. to 40 per cent., though 25 per cent. is a fair average and  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. may be considered good.

Whilst in theory it would seem that a more obvious



relationship should be maintained between the sizes of the fiction and non-fiction stocks, in practice we have to consider what books are obtainable. There is no useful purpose served in purchasing fiction just for the sake of increasing the fiction stock. It would be a process of duplication except in the very smallest of libraries. And further, it is comparatively infrequently that we are asked for a novel that is not in stock, whereas the figures of the issues through the Regional Library Bureaux indicate to a certain extent (and to a certain extent only) the incompleteness and insufficiency of the non-fiction book stocks of many libraries.

During the past few years the conception of the ideal non-fiction stock for a public library has altered fundamentally. Popular non-fiction used to be discouraged whereas to-day there is a growing tendency to provide as many books as required, compatible with financial resources, on arts and crafts, hobbies and other leisure time activities. The problem of leisure has become increasingly important and the public library is fulfilling an invaluable social function in providing books of this description. But it must be emphasized that books of this nature must be essentially practical. Thus, for this type of borrower, a book on poultry keeping is of more use if written by a poultry fancier and intended for the small breeder, than if written by a biologist. The latter book may be of more value as a scientific treatise and contain the results of research, and by which the small poultry keeper may ultimately profit, but if it does not suit the likely needs and requirements of our borrower we should hesitate before making the purchase. After all, the suitability of a book in relation to the type of reader must always be considered.

The question of suitability is particularly introduced when considering the purchase of books in the literature class, and also the arts in general. Such subjects are popular amongst librarians and even where they are not there is a tradition that literature should be the backbone of the library's book stock, which combine to make the collection unduly over-representative of such books to the disadvantage of scientific and technical works.

Thus we have indicated broadly the nature of the non-fiction stock, but what of the fiction? That fiction question—shades of the early nineteen thirties and the Twopenny Library. It is but a few years ago that librarians were talking of flooding their libraries with popular fiction in order to gain more borrowers. A few librarians thought—and probably some do still think—that once a borrower is attracted to the library by this ephemeral literature the staff can train him, or her, to read better books. I have yet to see any scientific confirmation of this theory.

And the quality of that fiction? This is a continual problem. Most librarians deplore the high percentage of cheap novels which are borrowed from their libraries. But the public library has to cater for the tastes and inclinations of a very large number of readers, and as Professor Garrod has said :

“I am sure, at any rate, that the best critic of books, in the long run is the man who brings to the study of them a large charity, and that the worst criticism is the ‘highbrow’ as it is called. There are a great many books in the world which are poor literature, but which afford more or less the means of agreeable and harmless recreation ; and to brush them aside, to pretend that one does not like them, that they count for nothing in the sum

of life's conveniences, is to be first pedantic and then dishonest. Robert Louis Stevenson loved what are called 'penny dreadfuls,' and said so like a man."

NOTES RE SELECTION OF BOOKS ACCORDING TO DEWEY  
MAIN CLASSES

*Philosophy.* The standard authorities should be supplied and should be representative, particularly in psychology, of all schools of thought, but the need for popular outlines understandable by the man in the street is probably greater than in any other class. The small library does not require learned discussions of philosophical and ethical systems.

*Religion.* Particular care must be taken lest the personal bias of the book selector be evident in this section. Choose books bearing on the interest of the district, rather than having a superfluity of learned works on abstract religious theory.

*Sociology.* Books which claim to settle all the world's problems should be viewed with suspicion. Care should be taken lest undue leanings to any political system be suggested. It should be remembered that interest in many sociological questions is very temporary.

Law textbooks are not within the scope of any but the large libraries.

*Philology.* The majority of books in this class will be, of necessity, textbooks. Textbooks which promise to teach a language in a few weeks should be avoided, but provide those recommended by the official educational institutions.

*Natural Science.* Popular accounts of science and scientific progress are useful but do not provide

them in super-abundance. Provide recognised textbooks, but learned works on aspects of physics, biology, etc., are in little demand nowadays. Consider the value of the illustrations, particularly in books on birds, animals, trees and plants.

*Useful Arts.* The technical sections must be selected in accordance with the obvious needs of the locality, and kept up to date. Books on domestic economy and crafts should be included only if of a practical value relative to the needs of the borrowers. Fanciful cookery books are of little value to the working-class housewife. Provide books on nursing, ambulance work, and general medical books, but not abstruse medical treatises.

*Fine Arts.* Avoid expensive art books unless there is a definite demand. Make sure that books on the arts definitely supersede books already in stock. Provide books on sports in accordance with local practice.

*Music.* McColvin and Reeves (*Music Libraries*, vol. 1, p. 8. Grafton, 1937) state "provide the very best the public will use—and don't underestimate its capacity." We should endeavour to relate the factors "importance and use."

*Literature.* Every library should possess the standard works in English and American literature and translations of the most important foreign writers. Contemporary plays, and, more especially, poetry should be selected on its merit. Little used third rate works of literature are not a desirable feature on the shelves.

In fiction, unlike many subjects, we have to select for the needs, and also the potential needs, of all types of readers. Hence our justification

of providing all types of novels. We cannot minimise the desirability of contented fiction readers and as an attempt at this end all popular good class novels of the Cronin, Priestley, Brett Young type should be duplicated. Provide obscure authors, particularly foreign ones, if the demand justifies—not unless. Personally I would exclude very ephemeral novels, but that is not everybody's opinion. Such novels are, in theory, usually published at 7/6, but are always available as remainders at a very cheap rate. I would prefer to duplicate authors like Sayers, Zane Grey, Deeping, Wodehouse, Orczy, Buchan, Crofts.

*History and Travel.* Books on history should be chosen rather sparingly as they are unlikely to attract anyone other than students and very occasional seekers after information. Genuine books on current affairs should be supplied liberally, and withdrawn as worn out or the interest subsides—whichever is the earlier.

A generous supply of adventurous travel books is usually welcome. Guide books are an ever popular item, but they must be kept up to date.

#### BOOKS FOR THE BLIND

The library should subscribe to the National Library for the Blind. Either small collections, which are changed periodically, are loaned, and/or particular books may be supplied on request.

It is not recommended either as an economical or practical measure that libraries should maintain their own collections for a relatively small and unchanging section of the community, but care must be taken to co-operate with, rather than duplicate, the work of any local associations for the blind, who

sometimes include the provision of embossed literature among their objects.

#### NATIONAL AND LOCAL INFLUENCES

Public libraries being public institutions, they are open to be affected from many quarters. A book or event may be boosted in the popular press ; books may be recommended by national organisations like the B.B.C.; or exhibitions of national importance may increase the interest in certain types of books—Bell's *Persian Painting* for example, was in more than average demand during the Persian Art Exhibition in London a few years ago.

National influences may contribute also to the publishing of certain classes of books, but we meet with these in the course of our normal book selection routine. But, we must keep aware of national events, broadcast talks, etc., and see that the books are in stock.

The public librarian should also have intimate knowledge of local societies and their proceedings. The most useful work will probably be done in the provision of books for the W.E.A. and University Tutorial classes and Extension lectures.

Whenever possible we should anticipate these influences, particularly in the case of film versions of books, and provide books in advance of the demand—not after the demand has arisen.

#### DUPLICATION

Duplication is not in itself a bad thing and something to be avoided if at all possible. It is far better to duplicate good books if the demand justifies it than to provide mediocre alternatives. There is usually, perhaps unfortunately, only one *Citadel*,

only one *Inside Europe*, and only one *Story of San Michele*. Borrowers asking for these cannot be given alternatives. Either the demand is satisfied or it is not. Not that borrowers can justifiably expect to receive these immediately on request, but the demand may usually be gauged, possibly by the number of reserves, and—finances permitting—extra copies purchased. As Mr. Sharp has said (*Branch libraries*, Allen and Unwin, 1938). "It is much the best course to multiply copies of the better fiction which most people want to read than to provide numerous titles by selection from some wholesaler's or retailer's list."

It must be remembered, too, that, not infrequently, citizens assess the value of the public library by the promptness with which they can obtain books such as those indicated above. A month is, perhaps, not too long to wait, but two months is definitely too long a period.

#### CENSORSHIP

Although there is a State censorship, there are comparatively few libraries in which a further censorship is not in force. Censorship in libraries resolves itself into banning books entirely or supplying them to approved readers upon special request.

But who is the library censor, and what type of book is censored? Books are most frequently censored in deference to the wishes of the public. It is comparatively infrequent that librarians themselves would deliberately censor books. After all, why should the librarian dictate to public morals? But librarians are aware of the public's reaction to certain classes of books and frequently such books are deliberately, consciously or otherwise, excluded from the library shelves.

The censorship is usually on moral grounds only. Books which treat of sex, either medical or birth control books, or novels which have a sexual theme, are taboo. The censorship is thus a narrow one. Provided a reasonable balance of stock is maintained books in which the author is opposed to the existing form of society, for example, are not objected to.

The censorship is still further narrowed by being a contemporary one. In most libraries the works of Voltaire, Sterne and others are on the open shelves, and which would probably be excluded if written to-day.

But should a censorship be imposed, and, if so, who should impose it? A public library is part of the social structure and should therefore conform to its requirements. The desirability of keeping birth control and other medical books off the open shelves is fairly obvious. It is in the case of doubtful books that the difficulty arises. Who is to decide that they are immoral and at what point immorality begins?

It is obviously impossible to fix a set standard by which immorality in books may be judged. Whilst there are few, if any, instances of people coming to harm through the reading of so-called obscene literature, the best advice that can be given is for the librarian to conform to local opinion. This last sentence must be qualified! We have noticed that medical and birth control books may be stocked but only supplied upon request and usually there is little opposition, if any, to this plan. In the case of books with a sexual theme or treating of sex in an outspoken manner, if there are strong local opinions antagonistic to this type of book being on the public library shelves the librarian should refrain from stocking such books. If, on the other hand, the books are



of definite literary or other value, the librarian would be justified in taking a firm stand and insist that they be kept in stock but supplied only upon special request to approved borrowers. The librarian will lose little in dignity—if anything his prestige would probably be raised—by conforming to general local opinion in this way.

Whilst on this topic mention should be made of the fact that, in Eire, lists of undesirable books are issued by a Board which functions under the Censorship of Publications Act, 1929.

As mentioned above the censorship is usually a moral one, and in spite of the existence of thousands of wholly righteous books they will on no account atone for one indecent one. In some subjects, however, we must take especial care to represent both sides of the question. This is particularly the case in religious and political books, although we are often confronted with a superfluity of books on left wing politics and comparatively few from the right wing viewpoint.

This has been particularly evident in the case of books on the Spanish Civil War. As librarians we should not be concerned with the author's politics but with the book as literature, and we should not ignore good books from one viewpoint, and include inferior ones written from the opposite viewpoint just to make up the balance. If our book selection in this matter is challenged we must, of course, point out the scarcity of books written from that particular angle.

#### CONCLUSION

To conclude this section on lending library book selection policy we may quote Professor Laski :

“I believe that the purpose of a public library

is to make accessible the heritage of culture, in the widest sense of the word, to any who may wish to take advantage of it. The first implication, therefore, of my view is to view that heritage as something independent of any special attitude of mind. We are not entitled to narrow its substance because we are socialists or freethinkers, exponents of one philosophy rather than another. The only test we can apply to the content of the public library is the test of significance. If the book meets that test, in the judgment of competent persons, the public is entitled to find it on the shelves of the library. The only censorship we are entitled to impose arises out of these criteria. The reader who wants the works of Lenin or Hitler, of D. H. Lawrence or Boccaccio, of Freud or Wycherly is entitled to them. Our business is to offer him access to knowledge of the human adventure. We are not justified in barring gates which lead to roads we may not happen to approve."

## CHAPTER VII

# BOOK SELECTION FOR REFERENCE LIBRARIES

Scope of reference department and types of reference books.—  
General principles of selection.—Particular subjects.—  
Local and special collections.

## SCOPE

It would be tedious to enter into a long discussion as to what is and what is not a reference book. That some books are solely of reference value is obvious—dictionaries, encyclopædias, etc.—but other books which are usually considered reference books are not infrequently of great value to the student in his own home. Some of the articles in the *Cambridge Histories*, for example, are among the best material written on their particular subjects, and are consequently of equal or more value than individual books. Yet on the grounds of their encyclopædic nature and of their expense the *Cambridge Histories* are usually placed in the reference department.

Mr. Warner (*Reference Library Methods*, 1928, p. 89) in answer to the question what is a reference library book states that "Reference books are on the whole of a more permanent nature than books for lending purposes, but every form of literature of no matter what type is likely to be used for reference purposes at some time or other in its history. Generally speaking a reference work is one which is not likely to be read through as a whole, a work of information

rather than of recreation : one which is used for consultation purposes only."

The problem whether a book is better placed in the lending or in the reference department is usually best solved by asking ourselves whether a person is likely to ask for this book to read or to ask for information which may be supplied in this book. In cases of extreme doubt the question may be solved by the proximity of the two departments. On the other hand, they should not be included in the reference stock solely on grounds of expense. It is stated in the Board of Education report, 1927, that "It is certainly better that many expensive scientific and technical books should be worn out in circulation, while they still rank first in their class, than that they should stand unused on reference shelves."

Reference books usually fall into five classes :

1. Books of a purely reference value—encyclopædias, dictionaries, concordances, atlases, bibliographies, etc. (A select list of "ready-reference" works is given in the Appendix to Chapter X.)
2. Standard works. Examples of these are Plato's *Republic*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Cunningham's *Anatomy*, Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, the classics of literature (Shakespeare, etc.), and so on. Elementary textbooks and those which students should themselves provide should be excluded.
3. Important contemporary work. Thus, in philosophy, we should include the work of Bertrand Russell and C. E. M. Joad ; in architecture, Le Corbusier's works ; and the poetry of W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, T. S. Eliot, etc. We should also include highly specialised work in this section.

4. Periodicals and magazines. Important reviews, scientific and technical magazines, transactions of learned societies, and similar types of journals which need to be studied with the same degree of care and concentration as befits a reference book should be provided in the reference library. The reason may be advanced that supervision is needed for this comparatively expensive material, but of greater importance is the reason of the impossibility of carrying out careful work amidst the usual distractions of the magazine room.

The reference librarian may have charge of the files and subsequent binding of periodicals and magazines. The binding list must be a selective one, but as much valuable material—from a specialist's standpoint at least—is contained in periodicals it is important that considerable thought be given to the matter. Of the national newspapers, *The Times* and all local periodicals should be bound, but others should be disposed of after, say, three months.

Periodicals of professional value should be bound. Thus we should bind *The Studio*, *Engineering*, and *Nature*, but not *Strand Magazine*, *Amateur Wireless*, etc.

5. Material which is unsuited to lending purposes :
  - (a) "Volumes too large or too heavy to be easily transportable."
  - (b) "Works of an unusually expensive character."
  - (c) "Works which are unusually valuable on account of their rarity or of their being out of print."

- (d) "Material obviously unsuited for lending purposes, broadsides, deeds, prints . . ."

The above factors must therefore be borne in mind when selecting books for the reference department or when the problem arises as to whether a book should be placed in the lending or reference library.

### SELECTION

The general guides to reference books by Minto, Mudge, and Shores, have been discussed in Chapter II, in which chapter there is also a list of bibliographies.

Excellent lists of representative reference books are given in *Library stock and assistance to readers* by L. R. and E. R. McColvin (Grafton, 1936). Reference material is also described in detail in *The use of reference material* by J. D. Cowley (Grafton, 1937).

*The Times Literary Supplement*, and specialist papers of the quality of the *English Historical Review*, *Nature*, *Engineering*, *Connoisseur*, will be the most fruitful and reliable sources for current reference books. Valuable notes about new books are frequently included in Mr. Woodbine's monthly feature "Reference Libraries" in *The Library Association Record*, and in the similar feature by Mr. Shores in the *Wilson Bulletin*.

The principles of selecting first by range and then by appeal, as discussed in Chapter I, still applies. The specially local demands in a reference library will be more obvious than in a lending department containing some 50 per cent. of fiction, and where some 70 per cent. of the issues are fiction. It should be our aim, too, to create demand. A satisfied reader is our best advertisement, and this can only be achieved by providing the best material for his use.

In medicine and law there are highly specialist literatures with a limited use. We should provide dictionaries of medicine and standard works of anatomy, physiology, etc., but not very technical treatises or particular medical research. Similarly only general legal works and books of law which are in great demand owing to local industry, business, etc., should be provided. It should be remembered that for books of law to be effective, it is necessary to keep the latest edition, and it is therefore an expensive section to keep up-to-date due to the comparatively high cost of law books and the frequency of new legislation.

In selecting reference books it is as well to ask ourselves whether this book is worthy of its class and subject. In cases of doubt, although some libraries do it as a regular practice, appeal may be made to specialists—university lecturers, professional men, etc. All selections by specialists, however, should be carefully edited by the librarian. A specialist is often liable to regard matters only in the light of his own subject, to propose books of such a specialist nature that they are of little value to the general public, or be very biased in favour of particular theories, etc., and frequently they have very little contact with the reading public.

As has been pointed out by Mr. Warner (in his *Reference Library Methods*) the public library should not purchase bibliographical rarities, except for the local collection. It is as well to provide a few specimens of early printing and binding with modern examples of fine printing and binding, but the public library cannot afford to purchase books at prices which are inconsistent with their values as working tools.

As a last principle of book selection for reference libraries we should bear in mind that, as an ideal of public library service, in every town of reasonable size there should be a reference library, where citizens may find immediately available standard works on all but very specialised topics ; where they may obtain information, or conduct research ; or where they may spend time in quiet reading at will.

### PARTICULAR SUBJECTS

The following notes indicate the scope of a reference library for the smaller towns of 50,000 to 100,000 population.

*General Works.* Encyclopædias, Press-guides, Bibliographies, Books about books.

*Philosophy.* The history of philosophy. A few outlines of philosophical systems. The work of standard philosophers—Locke, Bentham, Spinoza, Leibniz, etc. Important modern philosophers—Bertrand Russell. Manuals of logic and ethics. Represent the more important schools of psychology by the works of the original thinkers—Adler, Freud, Jung, McDougall, Spearman, Watson, etc., and a few manuals such as Woodworth's.

*Religion.* Histories of religion. Hasting's *Encyclopædia*. The Holy Books of Christianity, Islam, Judaism. Bible commentaries and concordances. Life of Christ. Histories and handbooks of churches and sects.

*Sociology.* Encyclopædia of the social sciences. Be careful of political science and economics as they "date," but represent the classical economists—Smith, Marshall, Pigou, etc. Guides to the law and income tax must be included, but beware of costly replacements to bring them up to date. Clarke's



*Local Government* and other handbooks of administration, educational handbooks and books on costumes and customs.

*Language.* Dictionaries, English and foreign. Grammars of the more important languages.

*Natural Science.* The astronomers—Eddington, Lodge, Einstein, Jeans, etc. A few textbooks of mathematics (Bertrand Russell), physics (Duncan and Starling), chemistry (Parkington, Mellor), geology (Geikie), botany (Fritsch and Salisbury, Strasburger). The classical authors—Darwin, etc. *Cambridge Natural History.*

*Useful Arts.* Spon, Henley, etc., on receipts. Patent specifications. Standard medical works. Handbooks on workshop practice. Dictionaries and handbooks of office work. Manufactures (with particular consideration of local demands). Building construction (Twelve trees, Mitchell). Dictionaries of gardening (Farthing, Wright, etc.).

*Fine Arts.* General histories of art, æsthetics. Architecture (Banister Fletcher, Ruskin). Bumpus, and Thompson on cathedrals. Standard works on coins, woodcarving, furniture (Cescinsky), etc. Painters and painting, engravers and engraving. (Reproductions of paintings should not be smaller than quarto size and preferably in colour collotype.) *Grove's Dictionary of music and musicians.* *Encyclopædia of sports.*

*Literature.* The more important works of the classical poets, dramatists and novelists of all nations, aiming at completeness in so far as English authors are concerned. The best modern literature. Histories of literatures (English: Saintsbury, Legouis and Cazamian). *Cambridge History of English Literature* and of *American Literature.* *Who's who in literature.*

*History and Geography.* Directories, maps, atlases, gazetteers—English and universal. Muirhead's, and/or Baedeker's *Guides*. Victoria County Histories. Standard historical works of England and foreign countries (Green, Trevelyan, Cambridge histories, etc.). More topical historical books go in lending department, but include ones of outstanding merit or on important subjects—Somerville's *Reign of King George V*, Trotsky's *Russian Revolution*.

*Biography.* *Who's Who*, *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Concise D.N.B.*, Chambers' *Biographical Dictionary*. Some standard lives (Boswell, Pepys, Shakespeare, etc.).

#### LOCAL AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*Local collection.* The library should collect all material :

1. On or about the locality.
2. By local authors.
3. Printed or published locally.

This material is kept in the reference department unless there is a separate local room.

A full discussion in this subject is given in *Library local collections* by W. C. Berwick Sayers (Allen and Unwin, 1939).

*Special collections.* Some reference libraries contain special collections relating to some particular trade, industry, or personage, or other matter, usually of local importance. Obviously local conditions will prescribe the principles of book selection for special collections.

Special collections of holiday literature are to be found in many reference libraries. If they are included—and they are a valuable adjunct to the public service—they should be compiled systematically, kept up-to-date, and indexed.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BOOK SELECTION FOR COMMERCIAL, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LIBRARIES

Development of commercial, science and technology libraries.—  
Scope of stock.—Guides to selection.—Commercial, scientific  
and technical periodicals.

#### DEVELOPMENT

IN this section we are concerned only with commercial, science and technology libraries as part of the public library service. They may consist of the commercial section, comprising directories and similar ready-reference material, frequently to be found in the small library to the large separate departments in such library systems as Birmingham, Bristol, Coventry, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, etc. In some places the commercial department is separate to the technology library, as at Birmingham, or the libraries may be combined as at Sheffield.

Though the commercial department was mooted at the beginning of the present century, few came into existence until just before the end of the Great War and many have developed in recent years. The incidence of the Great War, no doubt, expedited the formation of commercial libraries. It was felt that the library service could assist the nation in putting its business affairs in order after the conflict by the provision of commercial libraries. The subject of the provision of commercial libraries

was also mentioned in the Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction.

### SCOPE

The commercial, science and technology libraries are libraries instituted in response to specific local need, and the material supplied should be suited to satisfying that need. Obviously it would be ridiculous to provide a large collection of books on the woollen and textile trade in a library situated in a district devoted to steel manufacturing and allied trades.

What are the demands on such libraries? The business man may want such information as is supplied by the usual directories, tariff rates, commercial news, etc., and the scientist and technologist will require books on physics, chemistry, applied science, engineering, etc., and—and this is very important—a comprehensive selection of periodicals as the results of recent scientific research are usually first discussed in articles.

In order to understand the scope of the commercial department, the student cannot do better than to refer to the excellent handbooks issued by the Bristol, Liverpool, Southwark, and other public libraries. In these there will also be found details of the various types of Almanacs and Year Books, and Directories (trade, industrial, professional, inhabitants of Great Britain, telephone and telegraph, and international and foreign directories), which form an invaluable feature of the commercial department.

Scientific and technical dictionaries must be supplied freely. Examples are: Thorpe's *Dictionary of Applied Chemistry*, Scholman-Oldenbourg's *Illustrated Technical Dictionary in Six Languages*. Government publications and publications of such societies as the British Copper Research Association, British

Non-Ferrous Metals Association, the Refractories Institute, and American Marketing Association, must be considered. Many libraries will find it necessary to include English Patent Specifications, the Abridgements of Specifications (classified) and the [Patent] *Journal*. Some libraries also collect the American Patent Specifications. Local street maps, ordnance surveys, maps of foreign countries, street plans of the more important British and foreign towns and cities, commercial maps, road and railway maps and those depicting air and steamship routes, and other maps such as that of the Grid scheme of the Central Electricity Board.

Another valuable feature will be the provision of house journals (e.g. Edgar Allen News), journals of the local Chamber of Commerce, and trade catalogues. Lists of house journals appear periodically in *Advertising World*.

As has been mentioned at the beginning of this section, books, etc., should be added to the commercial, science and technology libraries expressly in accordance with local demand and the book selection requires especial care and diligence as the material must be sought mostly in specialist periodicals. Important textbooks—if they are in frequent use—must be duplicated freely.

#### GUIDES TO SELECTION

For the selection of the basic stock reference will have to be made to the usual general guides and aids to book selection—*Cumulative Book List*, Sonnenschein, Philip's *Best Books of the Year*, etc. There are also more specific guides to scientific and technical literature, such as the *Select List of Standard British Scientific and Technical Books*, 1937, published by

ASLIB ; the *Catalogue of British Scientific and Technical Books*, 3rd edn., 1930, published by the British Science Guild ; Roberts' *Guide to Technical Literature*, 1939 ; and the current *Programme* of the Department of Technology of the City and Guilds of London Institute. There are also the special guides such as Crane and Paterson's *Guide to the Literature of Chemistry*.

Whilst the catalogues and announcements of publishers specialising in scientific and technical literature must be closely watched, the most fruitful guide to book selection will be the reviews in specialist periodicals such as *Economica*, *Science Progress*, *Nature*, *Engineering*, *Electrical Review*, etc.

At intervals, supplements of "Reviews and forthcoming books" are issued with *Nature*, in which periodical there is always a monthly supplement of "Recent scientific and technical books" arranged under broad subject headings, with accurate bibliographical information.

Mention has been made above of the importance of having a comprehensive range of scientific and technical periodicals in view of the up-to-date material contained therein, and for this reason a select list of these, which may be adapted to local needs, is given at the end of this chapter. In connection with periodicals *The Industrial Arts Index* (H. W. Wilson Co.) will be found most useful. It is a monthly cumulative subject index to over 237 engineering, trade and business periodicals, and also about 4,000 books and pamphlets are included each year. Professional papers (*Nature*, *Lancet*, *Engineering*, etc.) should be bound, but those of a more popular or transitory nature (*Wireless World*, *Yachting Monthly*, etc.) need only be kept for a few months. Timetables obviously need not be kept.

The quarterly ASLIB *Booklist* is valuable to the commercial library for checking purposes only, for by the time it is issued the books should have been purchased.

The American *Technical Book Review Index* is issued monthly, except July and August, and is particularly valuable as an aid for selecting American and foreign books, though most English works have been procured by the time this is published. It is an alphabetical author list with a cumulative subject index. Excerpts from reviews are given, together with an indication as to whether the review was favourable or otherwise.

The actual commencement of book selection for commercial, science and technology libraries must lie in the checking of publisher's catalogues, the *Bookseller*, the *Cumulative Book Index*, and similar works in accordance with the method described in Chapter IV; whilst as a round-off to our selection we should check the lists issued by libraries and societies. Croydon, Coventry, Sheffield, etc., issue lists of recently acquired scientific and technical books. There is also the *Weekly Bibliography of Pure and Applied Science*, issued by the Science Museum Library, *New Technical Books* issued quarterly by the New York Public Library, and *Technical Books of 19—* issued annually by the Pratt Institute. Year-books of scientific and technical societies and school and college syllabuses may be profitably studied.

In many cases books will have to be purchased on the strength of the review. Certain publishers have a reputation for sound technical works, whilst others are not so careful about including the date of publication or of publishing so-called new editions. It is as well to recruit specialists who are in a position

to advise as to the importance of technical publications. Occasionally, particularly when there is nothing else on the subject, books in foreign languages will have to be purchased.

# A SELECT LIST OF COMMERCIAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PERIODICALS

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
A B C Railway Guide (London) . . . . .	M
Accountant . . . . .	W
Advertiser's Weekly . . . . .	W
Advertising and Selling . . . . .	F
Advertising Monthly . . . . .	M
Advertising World . . . . .	M
Aeroplane . . . . .	W
Agriculture . . . . .	M
Aircraft Production . . . . .	M
Alloy Metals Review . . . . .	M-2
American Chemical Society : Chemical Extracts	Bi-M
American Chemical Society Journal . . . . .	M
American Gas Assocn. Monthly . . . . .	M
American Gas Journal . . . . .	M
American Society for Metals : Transactions	Q
American Society of Mechanical Engineers : Transactions . . . . .	M
Analyst . . . . .	M
Architect and Building News . . . . .	W
Architects' Journal . . . . .	W
Archiv fur das Eisenhüttenwesen . . . . .	M
Art and Industry . . . . .	M
Australasian Manufacturer . . . . .	W
Autocar . . . . .	W
Automobile Engineer . . . . .	M
Baker and Confectioner . . . . .	W
Bank of England Statistical Summary . . . . .	M
Bank of London and S. American Fortnightly Review . . . . .	F
Bankers' Magazine . . . . .	M
Barclays's Bank Monthly Review . . . . .	M
Beama Journal . . . . .	M
Birmingham Met. Soc. Journal . . . . .	Q
Blast Furnace and Steel Plant . . . . .	M



<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Board of Trade Journal . . . . .	W
Bradshaw's Continental Guide . . . . .	Irreg.
Bradshaw's International Air Guide . . . . .	M
Bradshaw's Railway Guide . . . . .	M
British Baker . . . . .	W
British Chemical Abstracts . . . . .	M
British Clayworker . . . . .	M
British Dental Journal . . . . .	F
British Engineer . . . . .	M
British Industries . . . . .	M
British Machine Tool Engineering . . . . .	M-2
British Medical Journal . . . . .	W
British Plastics . . . . .	M
British Printer . . . . .	M-2
British Steelmaker . . . . .	M
British Trade Journal . . . . .	M
Builder . . . . .	W
Building Science Abstracts . . . . .	M
Building Times . . . . .	M
Bus and Coach . . . . .	M
Business . . . . .	M
Cabinet Maker . . . . .	W
Canadian Patent Office Record . . . . .	W
Caterer and Hotel Keeper . . . . .	W
Cement and Cement Manufacture . . . . .	M
Cement, Lime and Gravel . . . . .	M
Certified Accountants' Jnl. . . . .	M
Chemical Age . . . . .	W
*Chemical and Met. Engineering . . . . .	M
Chemical Society Journal . . . . .	M
Chemical Trade Journal . . . . .	W
Chemist and Druggist . . . . .	W
Chemistry and Industry (Jnl. of the Soc. of Chemical Industry) . . . . .	W
Civil Engineering . . . . .	M
Claycraft . . . . .	M
Clerk . . . . .	Q
Clerks of Works Assocn. Jnl. . . . .	M
Coal Merchant and Shipper . . . . .	W
Cold Storage . . . . .	M
Colliery Engineering . . . . .	M
Colliery Guardian . . . . .	W
Commercial Motor . . . . .	W
Company Accountant . . . . .	Q

# COMMERCIAL, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LIBRARIES 111

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Concrete and Constructional Engineer . . . . .	M
Confectionery Journal . . . . .	W
Confectionery News . . . . .	F
Contract Journal . . . . .	W
Contractors' Record . . . . .	W
Corporate Accountant . . . . .	Bi-M
Cost Accountant . . . . .	M
Cotton . . . . .	W
Coventry Engineering Soc. Jnl. . . . .	M-2
Dairyman . . . . .	M
Decorator . . . . .	M
Demag News . . . . .	M
Discovery . . . . .	M
Drapers' Record . . . . .	W
Drop Forger . . . . .	Q
Dyer . . . . .	F
Economic Journal . . . . .	Q
Economica . . . . .	Q
Economist . . . . .	W
Edgar Allen News . . . . .	M
Education for Commerce . . . . .	M
Efficiency Magazine . . . . .	W
Electric Welding . . . . .	M-2
Electrical Power Engineer . . . . .	M
Electrical Review . . . . .	W
Electrical Times . . . . .	W
Electrical World . . . . .	W
Electrician . . . . .	W
Electrodepositors' Tech. Soc. Jnl. . . . .	Y
Engineer . . . . .	W
Engineering . . . . .	W
Engineering and Boiler House Review . . . . .	M
English Electric Journal . . . . .	Q
English Mechanic . . . . .	W
Estates Gazette . . . . .	W
Faraday Society Transactions . . . . .	M
Farmer and Stock-breeder . . . . .	W
Financial News . . . . .	D
Financial Times . . . . .	D
Fish Trades Gazette . . . . .	W
Flight . . . . .	W
Food Manufacturer . . . . .	M
Food Processing, Packing and Marketing . . . . .	M
*Foundry . . . . .	M

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Foundry Trades Journal . . . . .	W
Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Trades Jnl. . . . .	W
Fuel Economist . . . . .	M
Fuel Economy Review . . . . .	Y
Fuel in Science and Practice . . . . .	M
Furnishing Trades Organizer . . . . .	M
Furniture Record . . . . .	W
Gas and Oil Power . . . . .	M
Gas Journal . . . . .	W
Gas World . . . . .	W
Geological Society Journal . . . . .	Q
German Industrial Echo . . . . .	M
Goldsmiths' Journal . . . . .	M
Great Western Railway Guide . . . . .	Irreg.
Grocer and Oil Trade Review . . . . .	W
Grocery . . . . .	M
Guaranty Survey . . . . .	M
Hardware Trade Journal . . . . .	W
Heat Treating and Forging . . . . .	M
Heating and Ventilating Engineer . . . . .	M
Highways and Bridges . . . . .	W
Hosiery Trade Journal . . . . .	M
Hotel Reviews . . . . .	M
Hutchinson's A-Z Time Table . . . . .	M
Ideal Kinema . . . . .	M
Illustrated Carpenter and Builder . . . . .	W
Imperial Airways Gazette . . . . .	M
Imperial Institute Bulletin . . . . .	Q
Incorporated Accountants' Journal . . . . .	M
India-Rubber Journal . . . . .	W
*Industrial and Engineering Chemistry . . . . .	M
*Industrial and Engineering Chemistry Analytical Edition . . . . .	Bi-M
*Industrial and Engineering Chemistry, News Edition . . . . .	F
*Industrial Arts Index . . . . .	M
Industrial Chemist . . . . .	M
Industrial Gases . . . . .	Q
Industrial Heating . . . . .	M
Industrial Welfare . . . . .	M
Institute of Bankers Jnl. . . . .	M
Inst. of Book-keepers' Jnl. . . . .	Q
Inst. of Brewing Journal . . . . .	M
Inst. of Civil Engineers, Engineering Abstracts . . . . .	Q

COMMERCIAL, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LIBRARIES 113

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Inst. of Civil Engineers Jnl. . . . .	M
Inst. of Electrical Engineers Jnl. . . . .	M
Inst. of Mech. Eng. Proceedings . . . . .	Q
Inst. of Metals Monthly Jnl. . . . .	M
Inst. of Mining and Metallurgy Bull. . . . .	M
Inst. of Production Engineers Jnl. . . . .	M
International Accountants' Journal . . . . .	M
Inst. of Mining Engs. Trans. . . . .	M
International Labour Review . . . . .	M
Inventor . . . . .	M
Investor's Chronicle . . . . .	W
Iron Age . . . . .	W
Iron and Coal Trades Review . . . . .	W
Iron and Steel Engineer . . . . .	M
Iron and Steel Industry . . . . .	M
Iron and Steel Institute Bulletin . . . . .	M
Iron and Steel Institute Journal . . . . .	M-6
Jnl. of Applied Mechanics . . . . .	Q
Jnl. of Commerce . . . . .	Bi-W
Jnl. of Decorative Art . . . . .	M
Jnl. of the Royal Technical College . . . . .	Y
Kinematograph Weekly . . . . .	W
Labour Gazette. . . . .	M
Labour News . . . . .	W
L. and M. News . . . . .	M
Lancet . . . . .	W
Law Times . . . . .	W
Leather Trades Review . . . . .	W
Light and Lighting . . . . .	M
Light Metals Research . . . . .	F
Light Metals Review . . . . .	F
Links . . . . .	Bi-M
Lloyd's Bank Monthly Review . . . . .	M
Lloyd's Import Duties List . . . . .	Irreg.
Lloyds Loading List . . . . .	W
Local Government Jnl. . . . .	M
Locomotive . . . . .	M
L. & N.E. Railway Guide . . . . .	Irreg.
L.N.E.R. Continental Services . . . . .	Irreg.
London Gazette . . . . .	Bi-W
L.M. & S. Railway Guide . . . . .	Irreg.
*Machine Design . . . . .	M
Machine Tool Review . . . . .	Bi-M
Machinery . . . . .	W

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Machinery Market . . . . .	W
Machinist . . . . .	W
Manchester Guardian Commercial . . . . .	W
Marine Engineer . . . . .	M
Marine Models . . . . .	M
Meat Trades Journal . . . . .	W
Mechanical Engineering . . . . .	M
Mechanical Handling . . . . .	M
Mechanical World . . . . .	W
Men's Wear . . . . .	W
Mercantile Guardian . . . . .	M
Metal Industry . . . . .	W
*Metal Industry. New York . . . . .	M
Metal Progress . . . . .	M
Metal Treatment . . . . .	Q
Metallurgia . . . . .	M
Metallurgist . . . . .	Irreg.
*Metals and Alloys . . . . .	M
Metals Technology . . . . .	M
Metropolitan-Vickers Gazette . . . . .	M
Midland Bank Monthly Review . . . . .	M
Milling . . . . .	W
Mine and Quarry Engineering . . . . .	M
Mining and Metallurgical Soc. of America Bull. . . . .	Irreg.
Mining Journal . . . . .	W
Ministry of Agriculture Journal . . . . .	M
Ministry of Labour Gazette . . . . .	M
Model Engineer . . . . .	W
Modern Machine Shop . . . . .	M
Monotype Recorder . . . . .	M-2
Motor . . . . .	W
Motor Cycle . . . . .	W
Motor Ship . . . . .	M
Motor Transport . . . . .	W
Municipal Engineering . . . . .	W
Municipal Journal . . . . .	W
Municipal Review . . . . .	M
National Geographic Magazine . . . . .	M
National Smoke Abatement Soc. Jnl. . . . .	Q
Nature . . . . .	W
Newspaper World . . . . .	W
New Zealand Patents Jnl. . . . .	M
Nickel Bulletin . . . . .	M
Occupational Psychology . . . . .	Q

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Oil and Colour Trades Jnl. . . . .	W
Oriental Economist . . . . .	M
Overseas Engineer . . . . .	M
Oxy-acetylene tips . . . . .	M
Paper Maker & Brit. Paper Trade Journal . . . . .	M
Paper Market and Printing Technique . . . . .	M
Passenger Transport Jnl. . . . .	W
[Patent] Journal . . . . .	W
Petroleum Times . . . . .	W
Philips Technical Review . . . . .	M
Pitman's Business Education . . . . .	W
Pitman's Office Training . . . . .	W
Plumber . . . . .	M
Plumbing Trade Journal . . . . .	M
Post Magazine and Insurance Monitor . . . . .	W
Post Office Guide . . . . .	Q
Pottery Gazette . . . . .	M
*Power . . . . .	M
Power and Works Engineer . . . . .	M
*Printers' Ink Monthly . . . . .	M
Printers' Register . . . . .	M
Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society . . . . .	M-6
Quality . . . . .	M
Quarry Manager's Journal . . . . .	M
Queensland Govt. Mg. Journal . . . . .	M
Railway Gazette . . . . .	W
Railway Magazine . . . . .	M
Refractories Journal . . . . .	M
Reports of Patent, etc. Cases . . . . .	Irreg.
Revue de Metallurgie . . . . .	M
Revue du Nickel . . . . .	M-2
Roadway Time Table . . . . .	Irreg.
Rotary Wheel, The . . . . .	M
Royal Aeronautical Society : Journal . . . . .	M
Royal Bank of Canada . . . . .	M
Royal Entomological Soc. Proceeds. & Trans. . . . .	Irreg.
Royal Institute of British Architects Journal . . . . .	F
Royal Inst. of Gt. Britain Proceed. . . . .	Irreg.
Sales and Wants (Printers) . . . . .	M
Sands, Clays and Minerals . . . . .	Irreg.
Science Abstracts . . . . .	M
Science and Art of Mining . . . . .	F
Science Progress . . . . .	Q
*Scientific American . . . . .	M

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Secretary . . . . .	M
Sheet Metal Industries . . . . .	M
Shipping World . . . . .	W
Shoe and Leather News . . . . .	W
Shoe and Leather Record . . . . .	W
Smokeless Air . . . . .	Q
Society of Dyers and Colourists Journal . . . . .	M
Soc. of Engineers Journal . . . . .	Q
Soc. of Glass Technology Jnl. . . . .	Q
Southern Rly. Time Table . . . . .	Irreg.
Stahl und Eisen . . . . .	W
Statist . . . . .	W
Steam Engineer . . . . .	M
*Steel . . . . .	W
Stock Exchange Gazette . . . . .	W
Stone Trades Journal . . . . .	M
Surveyor . . . . .	W
Television . . . . .	M
Textile Weekly . . . . .	W
Timber News and Machine Woodworker . . . . .	M
Timber Trades Journal . . . . .	W
"Times" Law Reports . . . . .	W
"Times" Trade and Engineering . . . . .	M
Tobacco . . . . .	M
Trade Marks Journal . . . . .	W
Transport World . . . . .	W
Wales and Monmouthshire . . . . .	Q
Waste Trade World . . . . .	W
Watchmaker, Jeweller, Silversmith and Optician . . . . .	M
Welder, The . . . . .	M
Welding Industry . . . . .	M
Westminster Bank Review . . . . .	M
Wire Industry . . . . .	M
Wireless Engineer . . . . .	M
Wireless World . . . . .	W
Wood . . . . .	M
Woodworker . . . . .	M
*Woodworker (American) . . . . .	M
Wool Record and Textile World . . . . .	W
World's Fair . . . . .	W
Yachting Monthly . . . . .	M
Zeitschrift fur Metallkunde . . . . .	M

Those marked \* are American.

## CHAPTER IX

### BOOK SELECTION FOR CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES

Percentages of stock according to age.—Guides and principles of selection.—Censorship.—Format.—Periodicals.

THE importance of a sound book selection policy for children's libraries cannot be over-emphasised. As has so often been remarked the children of to-day are the adults of to-morrow, and especial care should be taken in directing their reading during their formative years. Again, it is possible that bad impressions gained of a library service during childhood are likely to affect the use of the adult departments during maturity.

The selection of children's books should be as soundly organised as the selection of adult books, as described in earlier chapters, and not a haphazard selection supplemented by a pick from the remainder bag.

The best books should be duplicated freely, rather than provide other—but inferior—titles, for children pass comparatively rapidly through each reading stage.

Throughout our book selection for children's libraries it is essential that we bear in mind that the juvenile library is the training ground for the adult departments. It is therefore important that that



apprenticeship be conducted on sound lines, for we hope that one day the child will be an intelligent and valued reader in the adult library.

#### PERCENTAGES OF STOCK ACCORDING TO AGE

Particular attention should be paid to the selection of books for younger children (*i.e.*, those under nine years of age). Also, it is important that the break between juvenile and adult departments be not too severe. The question of book selection for the adolescent department will not be discussed here, not that the writer disagrees with the existence of adolescent libraries, but rather that adolescent library book selection has been fully discussed in Mr. Eric Leyland's book on that subject. Percentages of stock in a juvenile department suggested by Mr. Berwick Sayers in *A manual of children's libraries* (Allen and Unwin, 1932) are :

- 60 per cent. of the whole stock for children  
aged 9-13 years.
- 20 per cent. of the whole stock for children  
under 9 years.
- 20 per cent. of the whole stock for children  
over 13 years.

Of the whole stock about 60 per cent. will be fiction.

#### GUIDES AND PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION

In the building up of a junior library stock considerable attention should be paid to the catalogues of other children's libraries. Those of Bethnal Green, Dagenham, Glasgow, St. Marylebone and Sheffield are particularly worthy of consideration. In addition

to the general bibliographies there are the H. W. Wilson Co.'s *Children's Catalog*; Field's *Guide to literature for children*; *Books to Read* and *Books for Youth*, issued by the Library Association; Faraday's *Twelve years of children's books*; and the lists issued by the National Book Council. These, and other catalogues and guides, have been fully described in Chapter II.

Reviews of current books are not particularly plentiful. Publishers' catalogues must, of course, be studied. A small section in the *Times Literary Supplement* is devoted to reviews of books suitable for children, but we are now fortunate in having a quarterly journal which is devoted entirely to children's books. It is *The Junior Bookshelf*. The proprietors of this paper also issue an annual list of best books.

Although as a general rule school text-books are best not supplied by the library as they require to be retained for a considerable period to be of much value, a certain number of standard books on most subjects should be available. Children should have access to Unstead and Taylor's, or similar, book on geography, the classic authors, and other elementary works; although whether these are supplied in the children's reference room or through the adult library is a matter for local administration. The encyclopædias specifically intended for children (Mee's, Cassell's, *The Children's Treasure House*, etc.) should be in the children's reference library together with, if possible, *Everyman's encyclopædia*, or *Chambers' encyclopædia*.

It is open to question whether homework in the library should be encouraged, but most librarians are in favour of it, particularly in view of the increasing difficulties (owing to radio, etc.) of it being

done satisfactorily at home, and furthermore the use of reference material is definitely a thing to be encouraged. For this reason therefore more attention than is usual should be paid to providing children with a representative reference collection—not merely encyclopædias, dictionaries, etc., but standard works as well.

In the realms of fiction we find an ever present demand, from the average child, for school stories, adventure stories, etc. As long as the books supplied in response to this demand are reasonable in their account of the hero's or heroine's adventures, do not antagonise other nations unduly, nor ridicule man, we should not be alarmed, for the demand is a healthy one consequent upon the instincts of the children concerned. And who are we to say that an instinct is unhealthy? The child to-day is born with the same instincts as the savage of two thousand years ago, and during the contemporary child's formative years he, or she, is being caught and tamed by civilisation. The effects of some two thousand years are crammed into the first ten years or so of the child's life. Civilised we may be, and civilised we may intend our children to be, but the combative, etc., tendencies are still there and by being able to read themselves into the story the children are able to sublimate many of their energies which would perhaps be socially undesirable at present if they should do in real life what the books enables them to do in imagination.

Since children pass through each reading age quite rapidly there is no need for a very large range of titles, but since the standard of taste inculcated in the child forms the basis of all future work it is important that the quality should be high.

### CENSORSHIP

Connected with this question is the question of censorship. The censorship of juvenile books is rarely a moral one—moral, that is, in its present restricted sense of sexuality. In so far as a book is a fair approximation to the truth it should not be censored, provided the topic is considered suitable for children to read. A particularly gruesome, yet true, account of modern warfare should be excluded, but similarly an untruthful account of warfare which describes it as an ennobling sort of job often with the British, usually, under withering fire, riding down the enemy at the point of the bayonet should not be in a children's library.

### FORMAT

The importance of good paper, type, and illustrations for juvenile books should always be recognised. This is usually only apparent by an actual handling of the book and for this reason juvenile books should always be obtained on approval. Alternatively, in the larger towns it is frequently possible to examine juvenile books at the shops of the local booksellers ; although it is worthy of note that at Sheffield a permanent display of juvenile publications is provided in connection with the children's library. Publishers send their books for this exhibition, and parents, teachers, and others are at liberty to consult them.

The general principles of good book production given in Chapter III should apply. The books should certainly not be larger than quarto owing to difficulties of transport by children, though this is only an ideal at present. Paper should be good and not the pulpy variety which has poor lasting qualities,

is unæsthetic (and this is an important point when considering the fostering of young minds), and is used chiefly on account of its cheapness and bulk, which makes a small book appear much larger than it actually is. Art paper in view of its heaviness and poor wearing qualities is undesirable, and also because it is particularly liable to become dirty.

In books for very young readers, the printed page should be small and the type large, but in books for children of about 11 years of age and over the sizes of type and paper should conform more closely to those of adult books. Certainly the type should never be less than 11 point.

Illustrations should be graphically truthful and the degree of difficulty of comprehension adjusted to the age of the child for whom the book is intended. For instance a child of 9 may be interested in a picture of any motor-car, but the child of 13 is more likely to be interested in how it works. Simple explanatory diagrams are often more useful and personal and relevant to the text than many photographic reproductions. A recent example of this, though in a book intended rather for adults, is Van Loon's *Arts of Mankind*.

#### PERIODICALS

A fair selection of periodicals should be available. In addition to the usual *Children's Newspaper*, *My Magazine*, etc., others dealing with wider aspects of life should be included. Many children are interested in engineering, electricity, radio, stamp collecting, etc., and will be interested in magazines dealing with these. Others showing travel in various parts of the world and pictures of current events should be provided.

A select list of periodicals suitable for a juvenile library is given below.

<i>Periodicals and Newspapers</i>	<i>When Issued</i>
Aero-Modeller . . . . .	M
Armchair Science . . . . .	M
Boy's Own Paper . . . . .	M
Children's Newspaper . . . . .	W
Countryside . . . . .	Q
Girl's Own Paper . . . . .	M
The Guide . . . . .	W
Hobbies . . . . .	W
Meccano Magazine . . . . .	M
The Merry-go-round . . . . .	M
Pictorial Education . . . . .	M
The Scout . . . . .	W
Stamp Collecting . . . . .	W
Woodsmoke . . . . .	M
The Young Musician . . . . .	M

A good illustrated weekly such as "The Illustrated London News," or "The Sphere," is also very useful, and experiments might quite well be made with introducing periodicals of the amateur mechanics type—radio, motoring, etc.

## CHAPTER X

### BOOK SELECTION FOR BRANCH LIBRARIES

Centralisation.—Basic stock.—Exchanges of stock.—Reference service.

#### CENTRALISATION

LENDING library book provision has been discussed in Chapter VI, and this chapter, therefore, will be confined to the general aspects relating to branch libraries.

The selection of books for a branch library is mainly dependent upon two factors :

1. The population in the area which the library serves.
2. The relative position of the central library.

The former factor revives the question of the reading interests of the community and has already been discussed, whilst the latter affects the problem whether a basic stock should be provided.

Regarding the latter, we will assume that the system is centralised and that, upon due request, any book in the system may be obtained at any branch. This, then, will enable us to rely on the central library for books for which the demand does not justify a place on the shelves at a branch. Just how far this policy may be carried out is purely a question of expediency. As an arbitrary rule, if a book has had to be obtained on special loan from

central, or any other library within the system, three times or more in six months we should seriously think of purchasing a copy for the branch making the requests.

### BASIC STOCK

The writer's feeling is that whilst a branch library should on no account possess a basic stock as such, there should be a basis of "good" books in each branch. The branch stock should not consist only of ephemeral and topical books. Books should be available for the reader desiring information of a general nature or an introduction to any well-known subject. Further, as has been said by other writers—and with considerable justification—"good" books give "tone" to the library. Thus, books like Trevelyan's *History of England*, Banister Fletcher's *History of Architecture*, Woodworth's (or similar alternative) *Psychology* and a representative collection of English poets and dramatists should be on the shelves. Notwithstanding, we should beware of penalising our readers inasmuch as we might be tempted to stock a certain standard book, whereas another might be more suitable owing to its being recommended for examination purposes or heavily advertised by the publishers.

The objection to providing a 100 per cent. basic stock at a branch is that the shelves will be full of little used and dead material, and that when such books are needed they can be loaned from another library in the system—thus allowing the book fund to be used to greater advantage.

The exception to this rule is when the branch is situated amongst a public which will make particular demands upon certain well defined sections of the book



stock. It is usual, for instance, for considerable demands to be made upon the technology section of a branch situated in the industrial side of a town, whilst a branch in a residential area is likely to require many accountancy and business text-books, etc.

### EXCHANGES OF STOCKS

In the case of the smaller branches an attempt should be made to provide a continuous supply of fresh stock. This may be done in three ways :

1. Increase the book fund for the branch.
2. Completely change the stock of the branch at intervals.
3. Plan a system of exchanges similar to those in operation in county library systems.

The objections to 1 are firstly the impossibility of having such a large book fund, and secondly that the comparatively small number of borrowers at the branch will hardly do justice to the stock and that the stock will not receive adequate use.

The objections to 2 are that there is a large number of books which should be in each library, and also the colossal amount of labour involved in transferring the records consequent upon a complete change over.

The best method is to evolve a system of partial exchanges at regular, say quarterly, intervals. This may be done on the lines of Mr. Oliph Smith's paper "Planned economy in book selection" given before the 1934 Library Association Conference and which is described in Chapter XI; or according to the scheme of Mr. T. E. Callander which is designed specially for urban libraries. This latter is described in "Mobilizing Stock in Municipal Branch Libraries" (*Library Association Record*, June, 1938). The method

involved is to allocate some books to "unit" collections of which 100 books can be transferred *en bloc* from branch to branch at regular intervals. Mr. Callander continues "Each unit is given a distinguishing number, which is carried in bold red figures on the date label of the individual books in each unit. During the fourth month it is called in, and at the end of four months the unit is returned complete to headquarters, where it is overhauled, individual books being repaired, rebound or replaced if necessary. The reconditioned unit is then sent off to a second branch for a further circulation period of three months, returning to headquarters every four months. One hundred books have been chosen as the number for a unit because, on the one hand, the arrival of a unit of this size at a branch makes an appreciable difference to the stock, while, on the other, the unit is small enough to be handled easily and quickly in transit and at headquarters.

"When a unit is assembled from existing stock, that is from books which have previously been permanently allocated to a library and have been accessioned and catalogued to show their permanent allocation, it is necessary to adapt existing records, and to do this as easily and quickly as possible. The stock register, first, is corrected by stamping the entry for each book transferred to a unit with a rubber stamp saying, 'This book is part of Unit No. 99.' Statistics of stock are kept balanced by including the number of books transferred to units in the number of books withdrawn from stock, and then adding to the net stock figure the number of books added to units. . . .

"One or two refinements of the system may be mentioned. It has been found, in practice, that it is not always possible to find a hundred new books

at one time to start a new unit. In such a case, a unit is sent out as a quarter, half, or three-quarter unit for the first time. On its first transfer, it is made up to the full complement of a hundred books by the addition of such new books as are then available. Units may be made up according to the fancy of the librarian. Thus, one may try, by experiment, to find a standard recipe for the perfect unit, so many travel, so many biography, and so on in the hundred. One may make up all-fiction units, or special collections devoted to a particular subject, topical units and so on. The system seems, in fact, to be so flexible as to be readily adapted to suit local needs and tastes."

#### REFERENCE SERVICE

There is no justification for providing a reference service at a branch which in any way attempts to compete with the central reference library unless—and this is very unlikely—transport facilities to the central library are bad, or the distance to the central is too great. A study room may be provided at the branch, but it should not be filled with classics unless they are likely to be used. However pleasing a collection of books may be to a librarian, he should remember that the study room is a workshop to be used and the books are not included for ornamental purposes.

The reference collection should be confined to ready reference books and to books of a general type, as given at the end of this chapter. Specialised reference books, such as Palgrave's *Dictionary of political economy* and Glazebrooke's *Dictionary of physics*, should be in the central reference library.

The methods of selecting books for a new branch library are discussed in Chapter XIII.

TWENTY REFERENCE BOOKS FOR A BRANCH  
LIBRARY

- \**Encyclopædia Britannica* (or, *Chambers'*, or *Everyman*).
- \**Whitaker's almanac*.
- \**Shorter Oxford English dictionary* (or, *Concise Oxford dictionary*).
- \**Cassell's German dictionary*.
- \**Cassell's French dictionary*.
- Hare. *Short Italian dictionary*.
- Appleton's *new Spanish dictionary*.
- Smith. *Small Latin dictionary*.
- Liddell & Scott. *Greek dictionary*.
- \**Black's medical adviser*.
- Oxford companion to English literature*.
- Benham. *New book of quotations*.
- \**Philips' international atlas*.
- Bacon. *Atlas of Great Britain and Ireland*.
- \**Telephone directories*.
- \**Road, rail and air time-tables*.
- \**Kelly's directory of [the locality]*.
- \**Who's who*.
- \**Chambers' biographical dictionary*.
- Low & Pulling. *Dictionary of English history*.

(Twelve essential reference books are marked.\* The others may be purchased if funds permit, and if potential or actual demand justifies their inclusion.)

## CHAPTER XI

# BOOK SELECTION FOR COUNTY LIBRARIES

Aims and purpose of county libraries.—Regional branches.—Book stocks—general and students' sections.—Sizes of book stocks.—Duplication.—Local collections.—Selection for branches and centres.—Reference departments.—Children's libraries.—Suggestions and requisitions.

### *AIMS AND PURPOSE OF COUNTY LIBRARIES*

As a preliminary to discussing the principles of book selection for county libraries we may well first consider the aim and purpose of a county library system.

County libraries were first envisaged to provide books for rural communities, though the Libraries Act of 1919 provided that authorities which had not already adopted the Libraries Acts prior to their adoption by the County Council might be included in the county library schemes. It is possible for authorities within the county library schemes to contract out thereof, purely in the interests of an improved service, on the application of the County Council, to, and with the permission of, the Board of Education and for existing library authorities to rescind their library powers in favour of the County Council subject to the approval of the Board.

After some years of development of the county library schemes it became apparent that there were

many small independent library authorities in towns which could be better served as parts of the county schemes. Some of these authorities were willing to rescind their library powers in favour of the County Council, others were not so willing and have refused to do so. Thus one often has the anomaly of a County Council being the library authority for one town, whilst a smaller town, or even parish, in the same county, is its own library authority.

Another anomalous position has arisen over the London suburban library systems. Essex, Kent, Middlesex and Surrey all have county library systems which contain large suburban areas. For instance, Middlesex includes Harrow, Southgate and Wembley, with populations of (1931) 27,000, 60,000 and 115,000 respectively, in the county library area, whilst the Essex [county library] area includes Hornchurch and Romford with estimated populations of 80,000 and 40,000 respectively. Since the authorities for these areas had not become library authorities by the date of the adoption by the County Councils of the Libraries Acts, it was only natural that the County Councils included these urban areas within their jurisdiction. Since that time, however, their growth has been so great that one is now tempted to ask why one borough should be administered by a county and the next by an urban authority.

At any rate, surely, the principles of book selection—and this is our immediate interest—will not vary greatly. Thus Romford and Hornchurch are bounded by the urban library authorities of Dagenham and Thurrock (Thurrock is a newly constituted authority which formerly consisted of the Urban Districts of Grays, Tilbury, Purfleet and the Rural District of Orsett, all of which—except Grays—were in the

county library area. In fact, it is the most recent—and a rare—example of a County Council rescinding its powers in favour of the local authority) ; and Wood Green, Edmonton, Enfield, Finchley, Hendon, Willesden, Ealing, and Heston and Isleworth are contiguous to Southgate, Friern Barnet, Wembley, Harrow, and other areas within the Middlesex County Libraries system.

### REGIONAL BRANCHES

In rural library areas remote populations have usually been served by centres established in village schools, institutes, etc., and more rarely by library vans of the exhibition type. There is now additionally a noticeable tendency to establish regional branches in market towns. Transport facilities are much better than they were in the early days of the county library schemes and many country dwellers regularly visit the nearest market town for shopping ; the superiority of having permanent libraries in accessible places (and with comparably larger book stocks) than small collections in the village school or library van are obvious. County library authorities are appreciating, too, the superiority of the service which can be provided by full-time branches, well planned and with professional staff, as compared with the somewhat erratic centres run by voluntary helpers in village schools, etc., although there seems no possibility of such centres being superseded ; rather will they be supplemented. At branches much more comprehensive book stocks can be provided, and the libraries can be run in the best traditions of an urban service.

Such a policy of regional branches will inevitably have considerable effect on the book selection policy

of the county libraries concerned. In a small village centre with a very limited stock of books, they must all or nearly all be of a type with a fairly general appeal. This for two reasons. Firstly, because the size of the collection and the accommodation available will seldom allow of an adequate selection for the general reader in any case : secondly, because in a small community there is not likely to be more than one or two people possessing any particular interest. In any county, therefore, which serves its public chiefly through village centres, the stock must tend to be built up on "general-appeal" lines, since there is little opportunity to bring before the public works appealing to people with special interests.

The position is considerably changed when regional branches are established. Stocks can be large enough to possess that desirable balance between general and special appeal which is looked for in the normal municipal library, while each such branch serving an area of from 80 to 300 square miles includes within its orbit sufficient potential borrowers specialising in any particular subject as to render the provision of books thereon possible and desirable.

In the 1937-38 Annual Report of the Herefordshire County Libraries there was included a map which admirably illustrates this argument, and an up-to-date copy is therefore reproduced herewith by courtesy of the Library Committee of that County. (Fig. 3.) This shows both the market towns of the County (those which are named) and the villages in which centres are established ; regional branches are indicated by solid squares, while village centres appear as circles. Where these circles are solid, people from the villages concerned borrow also from



the regional branch to which the village is joined by an unbroken line. Hollow circles indicate that no borrowing is done outside the village, and are joined to one or more market towns by broken lines. Shaded areas are those of independent library authorities.

It is usual for the County Council to levy a rate to cover the supply of books and staff salaries, but, in some cases, if a superior service is required a differential rate may be levied upon the local authority concerned. This practice is dying out, and the majority of County Councils probably levy a flat rate over the whole of the county library area. Obviously this latter is the only satisfactory method where a regional branch policy has been adopted.

Thus a county library may serve :

1. London and provincial suburban areas.
2. Towns of all types and sizes up to say 30,000 inhabitants.
3. Villages, hamlets and remote areas.

Differential or flat rating may be in force. Naturally, all these factors in so far as they relate to any particular county must be taken into account when considering book selection for county libraries.

#### BOOK STOCKS—GENERAL AND STUDENTS' SECTIONS

Many county librarians find it convenient to divide their book stock into :

- (a) Students' books, and
- (b) General stock ;

although with the increase in the number of branches, and the generally wider interpretation of the scope of the "Students' service," this division is rapidly breaking down. The "Students' books," which used

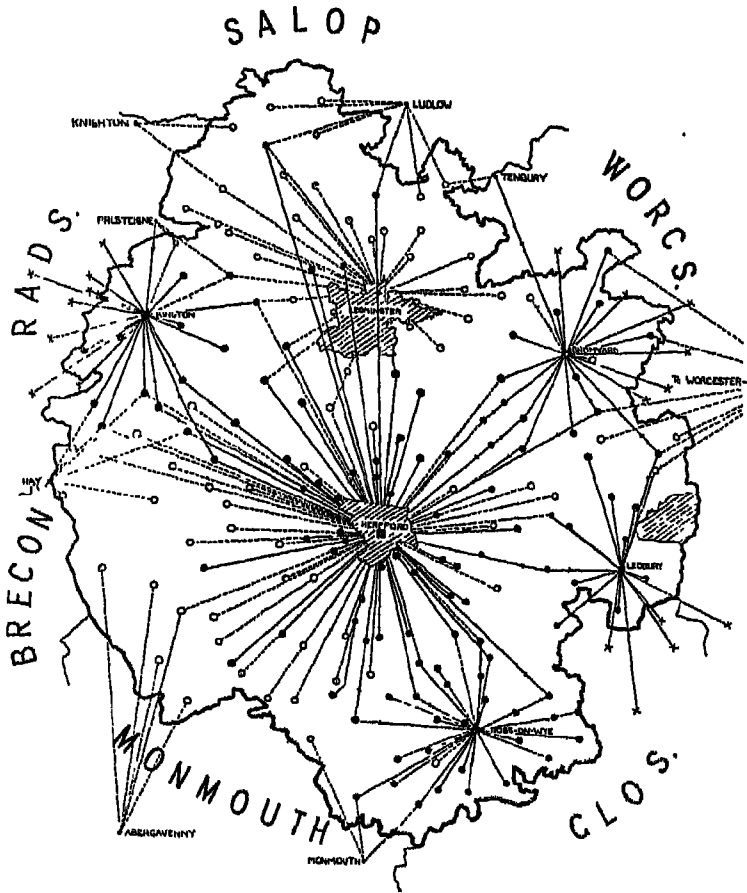


FIG. 3.—Herefordshire County Libraries—Regional branches.

to be kept at headquarters are now mostly distributed among the branches.

With one important exception the principles of book selection for county library branches in urban and London suburban areas should not differ to any marked extent from the principles which obtain in comparable libraries run by urban library authorities. The exception is that little-used books, which would need to be stocked by each urban library system will only be stocked in single copies by county library systems, and need not be kept at each branch, or even in each district served. Thus an urban district or borough must rely on the resources of its own library system for many works which, were it served by the county scheme, need not be stocked locally, there being the county library headquarters to call upon. Further, there are very many books which have to be stocked by each independent, though neighbouring, urban library authority, whereas one copy would be sufficient for several towns.

In county library branches there will be lending departments, and there may or may not be reference departments, children's departments and sometimes reading rooms, although occasionally the latter will be combined with the lending department. Much of the more specialised reference work could, and should, be centralised at headquarters, with a consequent saving in cost. Local reference collections should concentrate on quick-reference works and special local interests.

In rural counties and in counties which contain rural areas rather different principles obtain. It has been remarked that the chief function of a county library is to provide "a good book for mother." There is a very considerable amount of truth in

that statement. The printed word must help to make up for the lack of amenities in the way of cinemas, theatres and other distractions of town life. On the whole, also, country dwellers work for longer hours than do their town cousins, and consequently the male element have little time available for reading. They usually prefer, possibly to atone for the loneliness which often is the lot of the rural worker, to spend their leisure in company rather than with a book. The village inn is preferred to the fireside. "In a society which quite inadequately educates its land-workers, and then rewards them with a wage of often no more than thirty-five shillings a week, an appreciation of craftsmanship in literature can scarcely be anticipated . . . County libraries are still very much in the initial stages of their existence and their public have not behind them that tradition of reading and the use of libraries which exists in the towns. The primary aim of the county librarian must be the provision of an adequate service to the whole of the area, the attraction of an increasingly large proportion of the population as borrowers, and the retention of those attracted by an inducing of 'reading habit.' And since most of those attracted will have read nothing but the paper since leaving school, their appreciation of books will be that of boys or girls of fourteen, as modified by our enlightened Press. The result usually resolves itself into an overweening interest in violence and passion." (Smith, B. O. Policy in the rural county. *Library Association Record*, October, 1938.)

Students and more serious readers are supplied through a special service known as the students' section, part of which is kept at the headquarters of the county library system and part dispersed amongst

the branches according to local needs ; though in many counties books are sent to the borrower from wherever they happen to be—headquarters, branch or centre. Certain anomalies are apparent in these schemes. A student may probably, for example, borrow the Cambridge histories for home-reading, yet such would not be allowed if the book were in the reference department of an urban public library. This is, of course, answered by the fact that the demands on such books are less in the county than in the urban library, and, unless the student happens to live near the county library headquarters or a branch, he could only have it for home-reading. The aim of public libraries in general is to provide the public with books, recreational and otherwise, and provided this aim is satisfactorily achieved we should not approach the county library from a biased standpoint and say that such and such a thing is not done in an urban library. With lower standards of education and few or no alternative sources of supply in rural districts, it is necessary to supply through the Postal Service many books which in urban areas would be deemed outside its scope, as being too ephemeral. This is an important point. Where resources permit rural counties usually place a wider interpretation on the scope of this service than in more sophisticated areas.

#### SIZES OF BOOK STOCK

Bearing in mind this general consideration of the problems of a county library service to-day we may study the more practical aspect of book selection. On the whole the percentages of stock and according to the Dewey main classes, as detailed in Chapter III, but inasmuch as there will be a greater ratio of

popular and recreational books to specialised and informational ones than in an urban library, for reasons already given, the strengths of the Dewey classes will vary correspondingly. They will vary as from an industrialised county to an agricultural one and even within the same county from a branch library in a suburban area to a branch library in a market or industrial town.

In view of the facts that in a county library :

- (i) The book stock is split up into numerous small units ;
- (ii) A pool stock, which has been estimated at approximately 25 per cent. of the total stock, has to be maintained at headquarters to work the exchanges ;

the book stock should not be less than 100 books per 100 population, but in any case this number will vary with the population served and should increase as this diminishes. It will certainly need to be not less than 100 books per 100 of population, where the latter totals less than 100,000, and it seems highly probable that in a very few years even these standards will be regarded as too low.

#### DUPLICATION

Possibly one of the most important features of county library book selection is the degree of duplication required. County librarians must necessarily, if they in any way attempt to meet the legitimate requirements of their public, duplicate some titles by tens or even hundreds. The reason for this is that the county library is divided into many branches and centres,

It may well be asked which titles should be duplicated and to what extent. Experience alone can decide this, but all books with a general appeal will need to be duplicated to some extent. Books may be assessed from reviews and from an actual handling of the books themselves and by the number of requests received. A reader desiring a thriller or love story is not often particular about which one he gets provided it makes, for him, good reading. The writer is only too well aware of the reader who wants a certain "Scamark" or "Sapper" title, but that borrower can, at least, reasonably be given another book of a similar calibre, but there is *no* alternative to an actual Priestley, Walpole, etc., title.

The question of what books to duplicate is largely an individual problem dependent upon the types of borrowers served. An agricultural county is unlikely to require many sophisticated books on the theatre and ballet, however popular they might be in an urban library. The interests of the countryman are plainer. The highly developed humour of Nicolas Bentley and Osbert Lancaster are unlikely to interest him. He is liable to be shocked by Arthur Wragg, Jack Jones, Aldous Huxley, etc.

It can be seen from the above two paragraphs, therefore, that not only must we consider what types of books to duplicate but also the relation of these types to type of public. Further, there is the question of books in great demand when new but in little or no demand after a year or less (*e.g.*, much biography, and books on places or topics of current interest—the Abyssinian and Spanish Wars). The popular, but enduring, non-fiction books should be duplicated to a great extent.

## TYPES OF BOOKS DUPLICATED FAIRLY HEAVILY IN A RURAL COUNTY LIBRARY

- PRACTICAL, "HOW TO DO IT," BOOKS.** e.g. "Teach Yourself . . ." series, and all such subjects as cooking, gardening, needlework, etc.
- SIMPLE INTRODUCTIONS.** e.g. "Science of Life" series, *Mathematics for the Million*, etc.
- CURRENT AFFAIRS.** With caution, and only outstanding examples likely to have a fairly long life, or to be so outstandingly popular as to be worn out before interest dies. e.g. *Inside Europe*, *Insanity Fair*.
- BOOKS IN DEMAND FOR SCHOOL USE.** e.g. Nature study, simple crafts.
- POPULAR TOPOGRAPHY, ETC.** e.g. Batsford's "Face of Britain" series, "English Heritage" series. Morton's books.
- GREAT WAR.** Where well written, e.g. Sassoon—*Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*.
- SENSATION.** e.g. *Persons in Hiding*, "Famous Trials" series.
- BIOGRAPHIES OF LIVING PEOPLE.** See Current Affairs.
- CLASSIC WORKS.** e.g. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.
- LOCAL INDUSTRIES.** Both practical and popularized books. e.g. agriculture—Frazer's *Sheep Farming*, Seabrook's *Modern Fruit Farming*, A. G. Street's books.
- PLAYS.**—Suitable for amateur performance.

It is recommended that juvenile books should be duplicated to an even greater extent, concentrating on the comparatively few good ones. Since children pass through each reading age quite rapidly there is no need for a very wide range of titles, but since the standards of taste inculcated in the child form the basis of all future work, it is important that the quality should be high.

A systematic plan of duplication was dealt with by Mr. B. Oliph Smith in his paper "Planned economy in book selection" delivered before the 1934 Annual Conference of the Library Association. Mr. Smith's scheme ensures that each centre receives every worth-while book within three years. The



centres are divided into groups of a size determined by the number of exchanges per year (ten centres is a convenient number where three exchanges per annum is the rule), and one or more copies of each book, which it is decided comes within the scope of the scheme is allocated to each group until it has been circulated to all the centres within the group. By the end of three years the books will have lost in topicality and popular demand, and their physical condition will be such that there should be no qualms about discarding the majority of them.

The "economy" inherent in such a scheme is obvious. By rational planning on these lines we can obviate much time-wasting effort. The purchase of the same books in twos and threes hardly makes for a satisfactory service, and adds considerably to the work involved in keeping the necessary records.

### LOCAL COLLECTIONS

It is very desirable that county libraries co-operate with urban authorities in regard to the provision of a local collection. It is unreasonable and uneconomical for the county library to duplicate the work done by urban libraries in this direction. But, it must be remembered that books in urban library local collections may often only be consulted in the library. This is obviously essential in some cases, but not all. Many could be supplied either through the post or for use in local centres or regional branches. There is no valid reason why books from the local collection, except original material, should not be sent for a time to regional branches, particularly where duplicates are available.

## BRANCH LIBRARY STOCK

According to figures in the *County Libraries Statistical Report*, 1931-32, the average stock at county branch libraries was 29.1 per 100 of population. The *County Libraries Manual*, 1935, recommended that whilst this figure could be taken as an initial stock, when the library was developed 40 per 100 of population would be necessary. The present writer feels that 50 per 100 of population should be regarded as a minimum, but that figure will increase as the population decreases, and in a town of say 1,500 inhabitants it should be well over 100.

The reference section creates special problems. In the smaller towns it is usually found that the demand does not justify the inclusion of standard text-books in both lending and reference libraries as is done in many urban libraries. Hence the reference section should include the best dictionaries, encyclopædias, atlases and directories. (See the list given in the appendix to Chapter X.) On the other hand, however, there seems no justifiable reason to suppose that county library branches serving populations of 10,000 and upwards—and there are a considerable number of them—need develop reference libraries on the lines of the urban systems. With a good reference collection and trained staff at headquarters the telephone removes much of the need for full reference services locally, and will save a great deal of expense, and the book stock of any county library branch should be built up bearing in mind the existence of the headquarters students' stock.

The book stocks of the branch libraries are kept up to date by :

- (a) Additions to the stock—new books and special requisitions.
- (b) Regular (probably quarterly) exchanges in branches with total book stocks of 10,000 and under.

Whilst it should be found that it is adequate if 20 per cent. of the stock of a branch containing 10,000 volumes is exchanged annually, this percentage should rise as the size of the branch or centre increases, and 100 per cent. of the books of a centre with a stock of 200 books should be exchanged thrice annually. The books at the centres should not be exchanged at less than intervals of every four months, otherwise the stocks will become rapidly exhausted unless they are more than usually adequate. Many counties are so organised that an exchange means a break in the service, sometimes of two or three weeks. To some extent this is due to local librarians and cannot be avoided. Three such breaks in the year are enough so that more frequent exchanges should be avoided. The better method is to increase stocks in such cases. New books and requisitions should, of course, be supplied as frequently as the service permits.

#### CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES

Whilst children's departments comparable to those in urban libraries should be provided in the branches, where the child population is large enough to justify them, and otherwise children's corners in the adult lending department, school libraries are an essential feature of the county service. The same principles of selection obtain, whether they are situated in the school or the branch libraries, as for the urban children's libraries.

The library should be a school and not a class one. This method should become more prevalent with the development of central schools in rural areas, many of which will, we hope, be provided with special library rooms. The size of the book stocks must be related to the age of the school. As an average I suggest three books per two children, although in small schools these figures would have to be modified fairly drastically. Thus in a village school containing twenty children of all ages, thirty books ranging from, say, 8—14 years, would be grossly inadequate. School libraries should be changed each term. Special sets or collections of reference books may be supplied to illustrate and amplify class work, but reference collections are best provided in the branch libraries.

#### SUGGESTIONS AND REQUISITIONS

In county libraries, where it is frequently impossible for the librarian to make personal contact with readers, suggestions of books for addition to the stock should be encouraged. In the case of centres, borrowers should send their suggestions and requisitions direct to headquarters, but borrowers at regional branches should hand them to the librarian who should report on the suggestion and send them to headquarters at least once a week. In the case of new books the procedure will depend upon the method of purchase—whether the librarian has discretionary powers, or whether all books have to be submitted to the committee for approval. Books already in stock will have to be divided into :

- (a) Books the library is willing to supply by post.
- (b) Books of a more ephemeral nature which can only be supplied at an exchange.

If they are of the former variety they should be sent to the branch making the application or if the application comes through a centre they should be sent direct to the borrower ; whilst with regard to the latter type it is reasonable to keep a file at headquarters which is checked as books come in from exchanges, book-sellers, binders, etc., and those books requisitioned set aside for dispatch to the branches and centres as soon as possible.

### STUDENTS' BOOKS

Considerable mention has been made of students' books in this chapter. What is a student's book? The writer feels that the nature of county library work justifies a liberal interpretation and those books desired by intelligent general readers should be supplied through this service. At least one county has dropped the descriptions "Postal Service to Students," "Students' Service," "Students' books," etc., and uses the wider phrase "Request Service." Travel books of the standard of Peter Fleming, radio and amateur mechanic books, modern plays, books on current affairs by men like Gunther, Reed, Bruce Lockhart, and so on should be supplied through the postal service. By "postal service" I include those batches of books which in many counties may be sent at special rates in local buses, etc. Reference was made earlier in this chapter to the fact that what is a student's book in an educated urban area is not the same as in an uneducated rural one.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SELECTION OF PERIODICALS AND MAGAZINES

Necessary limitation of expenditure on periodicals and magazines.—Principles of selection.

THE provision of newspapers and magazines must be conditioned by the size and scope of the library, whether it is a large central library with news and magazine rooms with the monthly and quarterly reviews in the reference department and technical, scientific and commercial papers and magazines in the commercial, science and technology libraries, or whether it is a branch with a single reading room or even only with accommodation for periodicals and magazines in the lending library.

The expensive nature of magazines, taken on a year's working, should be borne in mind. Whilst one shilling per week seems inexpensive, we cannot over emphasize the obvious fact that for that expenditure books to the value of £2 12s. *od.* may be purchased during one year alone.

Thus, we have to limit rather than to select. Considerable attention has been paid in the past to representing all shades of political and religious opinions in our reading rooms, but we feel that it is an unsound policy to concede the right of political or religious representation without any limitation. To develop that to its logical conclusion would mean

that we are liable to introduce a host of such literature, though much of it may be donated, which would take up valuable space in these days of small reading rooms. The moral is, however, do not develop it to its logical conclusion, but establish a definite policy. Thus, religion should be represented by one standard periodical for the foremost religious bodies, and deal similarly in respect of politics. We must then steadfastly refuse to accede to any suggestions for, and to decline any offers of, additional periodicals.

If we are to accept any criteria for selecting periodicals it must be for the excellence of their journalistic quality and/or their practical value. Further, we may have several periodicals of the same type and the provision must be limited. There are several, for instance, which deal with contemporary history in general, and society life and the latest mode in particular, and whilst the writer feels that one—*The Illustrated London News*, for example—should be taken, and bound, there is no apparent justification for providing further examples. Similarly, there are several motoring and radio periodicals and a choice must be made.

There is a tendency for librarians to desire to provide all the "highbrow" papers—*The New Statesman*, *The Spectator*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Life and Letters To-day*, and other reviews. Whilst they should all be taken, particularly for book selection purposes, it is extravagant to provide them all in all the reading rooms, at branches at least, if the demand is slight.

The visitor to the reading room may expect to find periodicals relating to current affairs, national and local, *i.e.*, daily newspapers and weeklies, crafts and hobbies. In many cases there are several of the same type being published and we must necessarily

limit our expenditure. Local newspapers may be duplicated as required, and one copy should be reserved for binding.

A word about periodicals relating to hobbies. They must be chosen for their practical value. For instance, the amateur gardeners will be better served by *Amateur Gardening* than by the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, which latter is a trade paper.

Care should be taken to choose technical and trade periodicals for their soundness and it is often as well to obtain the advice of a specialist. Obviously it is of paramount importance that they be selected in accordance with local industries and pursuits affected by local conditions.

The following is a brief list of representative periodicals. In adapting it to the needs of an inland town, for example, it would be necessary to delete the nautical periodicals :

	GENERAL	When Issued
Blackwood's Magazine . . . . .		M
Chamber's Journal . . . . .		M
Contemporary Review . . . . .		M
Cornhill Magazine . . . . .		M
Country Life . . . . .		W
Fortnightly Review . . . . .		M
Illustrated London News . . . . .		W
Listener . . . . .		W
New Statesman and Nation . . . . .		W
Nineteenth Century and After . . . . .		M
Notes and Queries . . . . .		W
Punch . . . . .		W
Quarterly Review . . . . .		Q
Spectator . . . . .		W
Sphere . . . . .		W

#### PHILOSOPHY

British Journal of Psychology . . . . .	Q
Hibbert Journal . . . . .	Q



	<i>When Issued</i>
Journal of Philosophical Studies . . . . .	Q
Mind . . . . .	Q

## RELIGION

British Weekly . . . . .	W
Catholic Times . . . . .	W
Christian World . . . . .	W
Church Quarterly Review . . . . .	Q
Church Times . . . . .	W
Dublin Review . . . . .	Q
Evangelical Quarterly . . . . .	Q
Expository Times . . . . .	M
Guardian . . . . .	W
Inquirer and Christian Life . . . . .	W
Journal of Theological Studies . . . . .	Q
Tablet . . . . .	W

## SOCIOLOGY

Adult Education . . . . .	Q
Board of Trade Journal . . . . .	W
Economica . . . . .	Q
Economic History Review . . . . .	M-6
Economic Journal . . . . .	Q
Economist . . . . .	W
Journal of Education . . . . .	M
Law Times . . . . .	W
Ministry of Labour Gazette . . . . .	M
Municipal Journal . . . . .	W
Sociological Review . . . . .	Q
Statist . . . . .	W
Teachers' World . . . . .	W
Times Educational Supplement . . . . .	W

## PHILOLOGY

Journal of Philology . . . . .	—
Modern Language Review . . . . .	Q

## SCIENCE

Annals of Applied Biology . . . . .	Q
Discovery . . . . .	M
Ibis . . . . .	Q
Journal of Ecology . . . . .	M-6
Nature . . . . .	W
Science Progress . . . . .	Q

USEFUL ARTS

*When Issued*

Accountant . . . . .	W
Aeroplane . . . . .	W
Amateur Gardening . . . . .	W
Analyst . . . . .	M
Architect and Building News . . . . .	W
Autocar . . . . .	W
British Medical Journal . . . . .	W
Builder . . . . .	W
Contractors' Record and Municipal Engineering . . . . .	W
Electrical Review . . . . .	W
Electrical Trades Journal . . . . .	M
Engineer . . . . .	W
Engineering . . . . .	W
English Mechanics . . . . .	W
Feathered World . . . . .	W
Field . . . . .	W
Gardeners' Chronicle . . . . .	W
Good Housekeeping . . . . .	M
Hobbies . . . . .	W
Lancet . . . . .	W
Metallurgia . . . . .	M
Model Engineer . . . . .	W
Motor Boat . . . . .	W
Motor Cycle . . . . .	W
Popular Gardening . . . . .	W
Practical and Amateur Wireless . . . . .	W
Shipping World . . . . .	W
Television . . . . .	M
Times Trade and Engineering Supplement . . . . .	M
Wireless World . . . . .	W
Yachting World . . . . .	W

FINE ARTS

Amateur Photographer . . . . .	W
Apollo . . . . .	M
Architect and Building News . . . . .	W
Architects' Journal . . . . .	W
Architectural Review . . . . .	M
British Journal of Photography . . . . .	W
British Museum Quarterly . . . . .	Q
Burlington Magazine . . . . .	M
Connoisseur . . . . .	M
Monthly Musical Record . . . . .	M
Musical Opinion and Musical Trade Review . . . . .	M

	<i>When Issued</i>
Musical Times . . . . .	M
Music and Letters . . . . .	Q
Stage . . . . .	W
Studio . . . . .	M

## LITERATURE

Life and Letters To-day . . . . .	M
Times Literary Supplement . . . . .	W

## HISTORY

Antiquaries' Journal . . . . .	Q
Antiquity . . . . .	Q
Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research . . . . .	3 times a year
English Historical Review . . . . .	Q
History . . . . .	Q
Journal of Historical Studies . . . . .	—
Journal of Roman Studies . . . . .	M-6

## TRAVEL

Geographical Journal . . . . .	M
Geographical Magazine . . . . .	M
National Geographic Magazine . . . . .	M
Scottish Geographical Magazine . . . . .	M

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR A NEW LIBRARY

Method of selection.—Question of a basic stock and principles of selection.—Provision of books in reinforced publisher's casing and facsimile bindings.—Purchasing.

Few librarians to-day are in the fortunate position of having to initiate a library service. Ten years ago there were many towns which had no library service, but we may safely say that this is not the position to-day. There are few, I think, towns, villages, or hamlets which do not benefit from a library service, be it public or county. It is possible that centres of population may change or that new suburbs may spring up, but if such happenings occur it is most likely that a library service of some sort, probably county, will be in operation. The nucleus of a library will be there and the spade work which some of us have experienced will be half done. Nevertheless the routine methods in book selection on the wide scale necessitated during the inauguration of a library service will still apply and these will be discussed in this chapter. Similarly, the routine for the selection of books for a new branch library will be much the same. The actual principles of book selection have been discussed in previous chapters. Local conditions must, of course, be borne in mind.

## METHOD OF SELECTION

When selecting the stock for a new library, whether it be an entirely new service or an additional branch library, it is extremely important that we ascertain as far as possible the potential reading interests of the community. Local conditions should always be a controlling factor in the question of book provision. If a community survey, as described in Chapter IV, is not practicable for reasons of expediency or policy the librarian should endeavour--by a study of local industries, local societies, etc., through knowledge gleaned from directories, the local press and personal contacts—to assess the relative potential demands.

Mr. Sharp has referred to the importance of ascertaining as far as possible the reading interests of the community when preparing new libraries in his *Branch Libraries* (Allen and Unwin, 1938). He instances two libraries, each with a book stock of 7,000, which were recently opened at Croydon, one in a better class area and the other in a working class district—"if these conventionally convenient terms may be used with no offence." In the former district the families were small whilst those in the latter were large. When the library in the better class area was opened the adult bookshelves became rapidly denuded, whilst the juvenile shelves remained comparatively full.

The conventional method is to go through the general book selection guides such as Nelson's *Standard books*, Munford's *Three thousand books for a public library*, the *A.L.A. Catalog*, the *Catalogue of British Scientific and Technical Books*, etc., and note the books required preferably on 5 by 3 inch cards or slips, giving each entry an approximate classification number.

The special book selection guides—such as those listed in Chapter II—should be studied and the items selected, noted and classified as before.

Catalogues of other libraries should then be searched. These will be of three classes—general catalogues (Liverpool, Glasgow, Bethnal Green, etc.) ; general selective catalogues (Dagenham “ Four Thousand Recommended Books ”) ; selective subject catalogues (Middlesex, Leeds, etc.) ; and catalogues of recent additions or the year’s publications (Coventry “ Bookshelf,” Croydon “ Reader’s Guide,” the Shelf-field Bulletin, and the annual booklist issued by Bethnal Green). In most cases these catalogues will serve as the best guides, reflecting as they do the book selection policy of other libraries.

Recent publications should be selected as they appear and included in the general stock.

All the cards must then be sorted together into classified order and checked with the classification scheme to discover whether any important subject has been overlooked. They should be checked, too, by the percentage tables given in Chapter IV to ensure that the balance of subjects is maintained.

#### BASIC STOCK AND PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION

A new approach to selecting the book stock for a new library was instituted by Mr. T. E. Callander when Chief Librarian of Finchley. He adopted two principles :

- (i) There was no attempt to cater for readers who might demand fiction of a trivial kind. The fiction selected had, as far as possible, some cultural significance.
- (ii) The theory of a basic stock was not put into

practice. Thus, instead of purchasing books which, it is usually considered, ought to be in any public library, and supplementing these with current publications, it was decided to purchase mainly recently published books ; with the proviso that any basic book would be added directly it was asked for.

The validity of the first principle is open to much discussion. The fiction question has already been referred to in Chapter VI and it would seem that the question is best left to the individual librarian and his committee, taking into consideration the needs of the local community to decide. At Finchley the fiction was selected according to the personal preferences of the chief librarian and the staff who between them "mustered a very catholic and fairly tolerant taste." Such methods were admittedly open to criticism on the grounds that it is doubtful whether any few individuals have the right to impose their taste on the community.

The light romances of the Ruby M. Ayres, Ethel M. Dell variety were excluded, as also were thrillers such as those by Oppenheim, Sapper, etc.; Galsworthy, Priestley, Walpole and other middle-brow authors were heavily duplicated, and detective stories by such authors as Cole, Crofts, Sayers, etc., included. A representative collection of the works of the significant authors of the present day was aimed at, and a feature was made of foreign books in English translation and also American books.

The non-fiction was strong in sections covering present day economics, politics, travel, literature, everyday affairs, domestic technology and biography. Science and technical subjects were generally covered

with caution until the needs of the district made themselves known.

Thus, the non-fiction was selected for the general reader, and it was thought that the specialist would not hesitate to make known his needs, and, generally speaking, a request for a book not in stock was taken as revealing a gap which was in most cases filled by purchase.

It is obvious that such a system of book selection for a new library service is worthy of serious consideration, not only from its departure from conventional practice but from its qualities of sound common sense. The reader desiring further information on the working and results of this method is referred to Mr. Callander's article in *The Library Association Record*, vol. I, 4th series, pp. 416-19.

As before remarked, the limitation of the fiction stock is an extremely debatable point and most librarians would effect a compromise. It may be agreed that it is highly desirable to duplicate middle-brow authors. The virtues of that method of selecting the non-fiction may be summarised :

1. The stock is definitely up-to-date (*i.e.*, in general literature).
2. The specific needs of the community in respect of scientific and technical books are served in response to actual requests, thus eliminating wastage which might occur in areas for which a more comprehensive stock had been chosen. This is assuming that it has not been possible to institute a preliminary survey of any kind of the reading interests of the community. It is assumed also that only a day or two elapses between actual requests and the supply of



the book—the librarian must have discretionary powers of book purchase without placing the books before the committee for approval.

3. The cost of the books is spread over a longer period. By permitting the books and subsequent additions to be purchased out of revenue we may save the borrowing of, or part of, funds for the initial book selection and thus avoid the payment of heavy loan charges.

It would seem that the ideal approach to the selection of books for a new library would be a compromise between a basic stock policy, and a policy of current stock whereby basic stock is added only if required.

The current stock certainly should not be neglected, but it is also very important that there be a certain minimum basic stock. Much depends upon the definition of basic stock and the definition of current stock. I would describe Methuen's or Ward Lock's guides to the Lake District as basic stock, and a borrower might reasonably expect either, or a good alternative book on the Lake District, to be in the public library. Such instances may be multiplied, and the library is liable to lose a considerable amount of prestige if such books are not in stock. On the other hand the Loeb classics are certainly basic stock, but I would advocate no librarian, who is commencing a library service, to purchase a complete set of these. They increase the initial expenditure in a proportion rarely compatible with their initial use, and they may justifiably be purchased when requested. This principle might well be applied to the classics of English literature—provide the works of the most read poets such as Shelley, Wordsworth,

but leave the lesser-known ones as Crashaw, Quarles, etc., until the demand justifies their purchase.

The new library, then, will in the main reflect current questions and there will be a preponderance of books on psychology, religion, social questions and politics, and history and travel. This will play havoc, for the first year or two, with our pre-arranged table of average percentages for each subject.

In the realms of technology and handicrafts books selected should be of an essentially practical variety. Particularly, books on handicrafts and hobbies should be selected for their practical value, and the librarian will find many useful little books published by the journals devoted to these topics—such as the Link House Press. We should beware, however, of making the name of the publishers the *only* criterion, but as a general rule the most reliable publishers are known to the experienced librarian.

The types of books in series have been discussed in Chapter III, and we may here add that there are few instances when it is desirable to purchase the whole number of books in a series. In technology, consideration should be paid to series of books, but each book must be selected on its own merit. Similarly, some series may be useful for filling gaps in the book stock, but they should certainly not be purchased *en bloc*.

#### REINFORCED BOOKS, ETC.

The question will arise, too, as to the desirability of purchasing books in reinforced publisher's casing. Reinforced binding is desirable in the case of books that either get out of date quickly, and which it is uneconomical to bind, yet which merit a longer life than that which they would have in the ordinary

publisher's casing ; and in books that are usually only used to a moderate extent. Guide books in reinforced publisher's casing fall within the first group and the library edition of the Everyman series are an example of the second type. By wise purchasing of books of this variety we can economise on the binding expenditure and yet maintain books which are of an admittedly better external appearance than the usual bound volumes one finds on the shelves of the average public library.

Facsimile bindings also warrant our attention, in so far as some binding firms not only bind the library's books in that manner, but also sell new books which these firms have bound from the sheets in a facsimile binding. Again the advantages of utilising this service are mostly for cheap replacement purposes of books with " short and merry " lives. We are all well aware of this type of popular fiction which is printed on paper that hardly justifies two shillings being spent on each volume for binding (not to mention the time of the staff involved), yet which has by no means ended its life when the publisher's casing is worn out.

We should, of course, distinguish between a reinforced publisher's casing and a facsimile binding. Many popular novels are available in both types, and individual cases must be judged on their own merits—not only the actual book as a piece of literature but also its price. The quality and type of the reinforcing should also be studied. To be of any advantage such books should be re-sewn and stronger tapes and endpapers used. It is not sufficient to paste a piece of tape between the board and the book. I have seen instances, too, of strong quarter leather covers attached to books as sewn ready for the ordinary publisher's casing. The leather has been pasted

down on to the spine of the book, with the result that when the books have been opened the thread has been pulled so that it cuts the cheap pulpy paper—with the obvious consequence that the leaves fall out after very little use.

#### PURCHASING

The financial aspects must also be watched, and the total number of books selected will have to conform to what can be purchased with the funds available. Many books may advantageously be purchased second-hand (though not books on technical subjects, legal books, or others which are quickly out of date), and fiction may be calculated at three shillings and sixpence per volume and non-fiction at six shillings.

Regarding the purchase of the books selected, the method adopted at Hendon was to circularise booksellers for those books which it was decided not to purchase new. From the reports received from these booksellers it was possible to obtain the cheapest, compatible with quality, etc., copy. Of course, this method is only possible or desirable in the case of classic and other books which are not out of date. General methods of purchase and the Net Book Agreement are discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ORGANISATION OF BOOK PURCHASE

Method of purchase, the librarian as sole arbiter, a Books' sub-committee and/or a book list.—Financial considerations—the Net Book Agreement, and the maintenance of stock.—Second-hand, review copies and remainders.

#### METHOD OF PURCHASE

THE method of purchasing books must necessarily depend to a considerable extent upon the method of book selection, which methods were described in Chapters V and XIII, and the practice varies accordingly.

There are three chief methods of deciding on or ratifying the purchase of books for a public library. They are :

1. The librarian has absolute powers to purchase books of his own selection, the only restriction being the purely financial one of keeping within the estimates. The librarian may arrange to show the Committee, or Books sub-committee, a selection of recent purchases as an indication of the trend of his book selection policy.
2. The librarian may obtain all the books on approval, if possible, and submit them for the Committee to sanction or disapprove of the purchase.
3. The librarian may compile a booklist in which the titles are arranged under :

- (a) Librarian's suggestions.
- (b) Readers' suggestions.
- (c) Replacements.

This will be submitted to the Committee who will approve or disapprove the purchase of the books concerned. Those approved may be further sub-divided into those which are to be purchased new and those to be purchased second-hand. This booklist may be compiled after the librarian has seen copies of the books obtained on approval.

4. The fourth, and in the writer's opinion the best method, is for the librarian to have discretionary powers to purchase immediately :
  - (a) Important new books.
  - (b) Books in great demand.
  - (c) Books urgently required by students.

The Books sub-committee should meet fortnightly, if possible, and consider the purchase of the other books.

Possibly, various compromises of all four methods are in existence, but the criterion involved should be one of rapidity of supplying the public with the books desired. The public should not be penalised. In some cases the librarian may have full powers to purchase at his discretion, subject only to the approval of the Chairman. The system adopted must, of course, conform to the method of selection and used in conjunction with the files described in Chapter V.

It is entirely a question of maintaining a balance between authority on the one hand and a rapid and efficient service on the other. Obviously there are other times, too, when it should be desirable

for the librarian to be allowed a free hand. For instance, offers of second-hand books are constantly coming in, and for the librarian to have to await the sanction of his Committee will frequently mean that a bargain is lost. Similarly with review copies—a much sought-after class !

Again, many books should be handled before deciding on their purchase and where it is not possible to obtain them on approval it is necessary to visit some large bookseller. Further, such visits are eminently desirable, for often insufficient justice, or otherwise, is done to some books by the reviewers, or others may be affected by the time-lag between date of publication and the date of the review.

Where the approval of the Books sub-committee is not sought before purchase, it still may be necessary to present a booklist to the Committee each month. This list will be in two sections :

- (a) Readers' suggestions, stating whether approved or disapproved.
- (b) Librarian's suggestions, including replacements.

In each case, author, title, library to which the book has been allocated, and price, new or second-hand, must be indicated. In the case of readers' suggestions which have been disapproved, those deferred for purchase second-hand must be so indicated.

Books will be ordered according to local practice, *i.e.*, either by the librarian direct or through the treasurer's department. When the books are received it is sometimes necessary to place the accession numbers against the entries on the bookseller's invoice in order to satisfy the requirements of the auditors. This procedure, however, involves considerable labour, and it should be sufficient if the

auditor is able to see the location of particular copies, by referring to the accession register, catalogue, or the cards from which the booklist is compiled.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The first question is one of limiting the purchases so as not exceed the estimate of book expenditure. This may or may not be an easy matter according to the comparative size of the book fund. It is, however, eminently desirable that the funds available be fairly equitably distributed over the whole financial year, as otherwise the library is likely to be impoverished towards the end of the financial year. Equally undesirable is the practice of ordering books when the book fund has been exhausted, putting the books into circulation but not presenting the accounts to the treasurer for payment until the commencement of the following financial year. It virtually amounts to overspending and as such is liable to bring the librarian into conflict with his Authority.

By virtue of libraries being large purchasers of books they are entitled to a ten per cent. discount through the Net Book Agreement. The history of the Net Book Agreement is recounted elsewhere (Minto, etc.), but its function may here be described briefly. This Agreement, concluded between representatives of the Library Association, the Publishers' Association, and the Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland, in 1929, is applicable to all libraries that allow the public to consult or borrow their books without charge, and which spend not less than £100 per annum on new books. The library need not be rate supported provided that any member of the public, on giving satisfactory references, is allowed to consult the books within the library building.



The library should be an Institutional Member of the Library Association.

Mr. Welsford (*Library Association Record*, 3rd series, vol. I, pp. 271-3) has summarised the further requirements of libraries under the Net Book Agreement as follows :

They must undertake :

- (a) That the books purchased are for the sole use of the library or its branches and that they are not for sale.
- (b) That they will notify annually their expenditure on new books under the licence, supported, if called for, by an Accountant's Certificate.
- (c) That they will accept no other consideration beyond the commission either in cash, kind, or services (*e.g.*, reinforced binding, or stamping must be paid for at not less than the full actual cost to the bookseller). The commission may be either taken in the form of books, or as a cash discount upon settlement at the option of the library.

Libraries requiring a licence must apply on the printed forms obtainable from the Secretary of the Library Association who certifies that they are Institutional Members of the Library Association and places the application before the Joint Advisory Committee (representing the Associations concerned).

The purchases may be spread over any number of booksellers, and whose names have to be stated on the application form. The discount was originally fixed at 5 per cent. for libraries spending from £100 to £500 per annum on new books, and 10 per cent. for those spending over £500 per annum, but in 1931 the Agreement was modified to the effect that

all licensed libraries purchasing new books to the value of £100 and upwards per annum are to receive 10 per cent. discount, except those books on which the bookseller receives less than twopence in the shilling, plus 5 per cent.

It is obvious that this Agreement is in need of still further revision, in so far as some libraries have not joined the scheme, and that it is not a sound business arrangement for a library spending several thousands of pounds per annum on new books only to receive the same discount as the small library spending as little as £100. Unfortunately at the time of the 1931 amendment the Library Association agreed not to apply for any further concessions. However, at the 1938 Annual Conference of the Library Association, on motions by the Gateshead and Ilford Public Libraries Committees, it was unanimously agreed to enter into negotiation with the Publishers' and Booksellers' Associations for a new Agreement.

A last point is the question of funds for maintenance, or rather replacement, of stock. It has been admirably summed up by Mr. J. G. O'Leary, Chief Librarian of the Dagenham Public Libraries in his *Organising a New Library Service* (Gravesend : A. J. Philip, 1937), as follows :

" If an Authority purchases a piece of machinery it is kept in good repair, an annual sum (if legal powers have been obtained) is set aside annually for the estimated life of the machine. It is replaced at the end of its life out of this depreciation fund. Books should be treated in the same manner. With constant use they deteriorate rapidly. The best of libraries are always attempting to overtake decay in books. A depreciation fund for book stocks is a

counsel of perfection which under present-day conditions requires special parliamentary sanction.”

### SECOND-HAND, REMAINDER AND REVIEW COPIES

The desirability or otherwise of purchasing certain classes of books second-hand, etc., have been indicated in the appropriate sections during the course of this work, but as this question comes so much within the purview of this chapter the recommendations on the matter may be stated briefly here.

1. *Second-hand books.* Books of a lighter nature may advantageously be purchased second-hand (particularly from the circulating libraries, about six months after publication). Fiction, popular travel and biography come within this category.

Basic stock and classics of literature, philosophy, science, art, etc., may be purchased second-hand, but only if they are the actual editions required and in good condition.

We should bear in mind, too, that many classics are available in such excellent and cheap reprints nowadays that their purchase second-hand is not particularly advantageous. Examples are the Oxford Poets at three shillings and sixpence and, in fiction, the collected edition of the works of John Galsworthy at two shillings and sixpence per volume.

Technical, scientific or other books which “date” can rarely be purchased second-hand, for it is imperative that we obtain the latest edition.

2. *Review copies.* Every librarian should be on the look-out for these. Various firms circularise libraries with lists of review copies for sale, usually at about 33½ per cent. off the published price and within a few days of publication. These lists should be checked immediately, and those which it has been

decided to purchase ordered by return of post, as otherwise many a bargain may be lost. We should not be tempted to purchase items because of their cheapness, but only if they have a definite place on the library shelves. They should be ordered for the reason that they have been previously selected or that they would definitely have been purchased on the usual terms had sufficient money been available.

3. *Remainders*. Such books, which it must be remembered are books which the publisher has been unable to sell at the full published price, usually fall into five groups.

- (a) Ephemeral books of travel, adventure and autobiography often published at as much as eighteen shillings and remaindered at as low as five shillings, or very light fiction published at seven shillings and sixpence and offered at two shillings or so.
- (b) Worthless books on academic subjects.
- (c) Scholarly books for which there is only a limited demand.
- (d) Expensive and limited editions. These are only occasionally desirable purchases, such as books on art containing good reproductions. De luxe editions of the classics are rarely worth purchasing, from an economic point of view, even when remaindered. Their size is often inconvenient.
- (e) Occasionally good books are remaindered, but even here we must be careful as books are only remaindered because of the lack of interest on the part of the reading public in them. A good "remainder" was Neale's *Queen Elizabeth*.

Lists of second-hand books, review copies and remainders circulated by booksellers should always be studied. Experience will usually show what reliance may be attached to particular booksellers in this respect. These lists should be studied with a view to :

- (a) Purchasing books, which have already been selected, at a more economical rate.
- (b) Purchasing books which the library requires, but would otherwise have been unable to afford.
- (c) Purchasing books for replacement purposes.

## CHAPTER XV

### DISCARDING AND REVISION OF STOCK

Necessity and reasons for discarding.—Types of books to discard.—Editions.—Particular subjects.—Pool stock.—Method of discarding and replacement.—Revision of stock.

#### NECESSITY

THE necessity for the drastic discarding of books is not so apparent in libraries to-day as it was in the early post-war years when many library systems were re-organised. Many libraries had collected, not selected, books since the date the libraries were opened—which may have been at any time after the middle of last century. Moreover the binding of all volumes in half leather had been a golden rule which resulted in out of date and inferior books taking up valuable space on the shelves. Such a state of things does exist, unfortunately, in some libraries to-day, but the examples are getting very few.

However, one still sees out out-of-date and little used books on present-day lending library shelves. "Out-of-date" is, of course, a term which really requires qualifying. By "out-of-date" I mean books on scientific and technical subjects which have, by reason of more recent research and developments in those subjects, become out-of-date, and which—if they are available—should be replaced by books embodying these new ideas, etc. Then again there are other books of history and biography which have been superseded by more modern works. This is

true also of many text-books on academic subjects. Another type of book which requires discarding fairly soon is the book on questions of the day—political, economic, etc.—or books on contemporary events.

It must be admitted that, until the post-war re-organisation period, librarians had not been at all drastic or ruthless in their discarding. The reasons may have been :

1. The fact that open access was the exception rather than the rule.
2. The fact that leather binding was all too prevalent, and which discouraged the withdrawal of a physically sound book.
3. The comparative slow-moving of the times in those days, and which must have resulted in a different attitude than that suggested in the modern high-speed world. Brown, it will be remembered, suggested that scientific and technical books should not be withdrawn until 20 years after publication. It would be ludicrous to have a book on motor-car maintenance and repair on the library shelves to-day if it were published 20—or even 10—years ago !

#### REASONS

Now that a policy of drastic withdrawal—by reason of the task having been or is being achieved up and down the country—is no longer required, we may calmly consider the why, wherefore, and when of discarding. There are three chief reasons for discarding books. They are :

1. By reason of their having become out-of-date, or superseded ; or the interest in the topic, person or event they describe having died down.

2. That they are worn out, and/or dirty.
3. That they are not worth re-binding. This applies largely in the case of books of topical interest or light fiction. Few of the books produced during the economic crisis of 1931 are of any value on the lending library shelves to-day ; nor are the host of books on the Abyssinian war, neither will be the books on the Spanish Civil War in a year or two's time. Even now, books purchased in the early stages of this Spanish conflict have lost the interest of the public.

### TYPES

This last point raises the issue whether books of such a short life should be added to a public library. Many are journalistic accounts, but as they reflect what is happening in the world it is the librarian's duty to provide them. There is little reason for them to be discarded on the grounds that they may be replaced by historical resumés. The person interested in these topical questions is unlikely to be interested in academic histories. His interest will be taken by another similar event, and therefore such books may safely be discarded, but it may be found desirable to put such books, or some of them, in the pool stock for a period and those outstanding in their factual interest may be placed in the reference stack room.

Many of the books in which journalists survey the whole of Europe can be discarded when the interest in those books has waned, and also the quick succession of books on the European Dictators.

We should at all times aim at keeping the shelves "alive," not full of unread and unused books ;



but the possible demand for books of a certain class or type should never, if possible, be overlooked. Local and national events often create a demand. Thus, for instance, there was at least twenty reservations at a library a few years ago for the late James Ramsay MacDonald's *Life of Margaret Ethel MacDonald*. This demand was created out of local interest. Again the tercentenary, last year, of the conversion of John Wesley evoked considerable interest in books which otherwise might have quite justifiably been discarded.

Books of local interest should never be discarded, but included in the local collection. This question of special collections does not receive the attention it warrants. Naturally, libraries should have books which are connected in some way with the locality or its inhabitants, but it would also be highly desirable if more libraries specialised in certain subjects. It brings in the question of co-operative book buying. Expensive, specialised, and old books might well be offered to the National Central Library before they are sent to the pulping factory or waste-paper merchant, but special books of local interest might first be offered to libraries possessing special collections on those subjects. The question of the initial purchase is really outside the scope of this chapter, but it is extremely important in so far as instead of, say, a dozen libraries purchasing twelve simple or introductory books on a subject—where, in fact, only one or two copies would be sufficient between these libraries—it could be decided which library is to collect certain special material; thus freeing funds for the purchase of more expensive and additional books and providing its public with a wider selection of that and other subjects.

## EDITIONS

Before discarding a book in favour of what is termed a "new edition" care should be taken in discovering :

1. Whether it is actually a new edition, not a reprint or another issue.
2. Whether the new edition is substantially different from the previous edition.

If the book is actually a new edition and it has been decided to purchase same, the old copy need not necessarily be discarded. The borrower might well find the material contained therein suitable for his needs, and it is desirable, if the copy is not dirty or worn out, to insert a slip in the old edition similar to the following :

JONES, L. R., and BRYAN, P. W. North America. 1938.  
5th ed.

A copy of the above edition is available in the Central lending library. It differs from this, the 4th edition, by the addition of four chapters on Soil Erosion, Hay and Wheat Belts, Power Resources, etc. Several chapters, chiefly dealing with agriculture, have been rewritten, and all statistical matter brought up to date.

## PARTICULAR SUBJECTS

The following general rules may be advanced for the discarding of books. The incidences for discarding have been mentioned above but we may here reiterate that books of which the publishers' casings have worn out should not necessarily be bound. It would hardly be good policy to spend money on binding, for instance, Cole's *The intelligent man's guide through world chaos* nor Gunther's recent best-seller *Inside Europe*. Such books, good as they are for their purpose, are particularly topical, and their

is no point in prolonging their life for at least another two years. (In any case, the latter is brought up to date in new editions.)

*Philosophy and psychology.* Discard freely popularly-written books on philosophical, psychological and ethical problems when the interest in them has waned. Retain systems of philosophy (*i.e.*, original thinkers), but books about systems may be safely discarded when superseded.

*Religion.* Histories and expositions of religion when superseded ; personal religion and sermons for which the demand has ceased.

*Sociology.* Theories and theoretical solutions to sociological problems as soon as the interest in them has waned, also books that "date"—foreign affairs, politics, etc.

*Language.* Out of date text-books, old grammars and dictionaries.

*Science and Useful Arts.* Popular books on science and machines. Not those of classic rank. Text-books when superseded.

*Fine Arts.* Chiefly replaced by new editions or better books. Be careful in the music section. Most music has to be bound, thus endowing it with a longer life than it sometimes warrants. Replace classics when worn out or dirty, but discard popular music when interest has waned.

*Literature.* When popular demand has ceased, except those of accepted literary merit. Anthologies when efficiently superseded.

*Travel.* Guide books when superseded. Popular travel when interest has died out.

*Biography.* When interest in biographee has ceased. Much biography can be transferred to the reference stack or pool stock.

*History.* Histories when superseded. Discard freely books on contemporary events.

### POOL STOCK

It is recommended that free, but legitimate use of a central pool stock be made in connection with discarding. Books which are of very little use on the lending shelves but which are too valuable by reason of their subject or are little used standard works should be transferred to the pool stock. On no account, however, should the pool stock contain ephemeral books in which interest has ceased.

### METHOD OF DISCARDING

The routine of discarding should be conducted, in a centralised system, in conjunction with the card illustrated on p. 179, 5 × 3 inch being the most convenient size. It is a dual purpose card serving both discarding and replacement.

This card should be completed by the department concerned, noting whether it is recommended that the book be replaced, and if so, giving particulars of the suggested edition in the section for date, edn., etc., in the lower half of the card. It should then be passed on to the person in charge of the book selection who will approve that the book be :

- (a) discarded,
- (b) replaced, or
- (c) transferred to another department or to the pool stock.

The card must be returned to the department concerned for the alteration of their records and then

sent to the cataloguing department for the necessary adjustments to be made to the union catalogue. If the book is to be replaced the usual Committee and book purchasing procedure may be proceeded with, provision for which is made on the card. To avoid confusion with the usual book selection cards it is recommended that this card be of a different colour.

### REVISION OF STOCK

The subject of revision of stock has been treated in detail by Mr. Berwick Sayers in his *The revision of the stock of a public library* (Grafton, 1929). We may here briefly mention that it is a process which should be continuous and should be conducted, when a library has been reorganised or is running on the most up-to-date lines, systematically, class by class, in such a way that the literature which the library has on any subject is revised every few years. This process may profitably be carried out as an auxiliary to discarding. At the same time we should watch closely the issue sheets, and, if the issues in a particular section drop, endeavour to ascertain if this is the result of an inadequate book stock in that particular class.

On the other hand, if issues of a particular subject rise we must investigate whether even further provision in this class is desirable.

At the same time we must beware of being obsessed with making the rise and fall of issues the criteria for revision of stock. We must remember that supply can create demand. We cannot expect people for whom we do not cater to use the library. The shopkeeper tempts us by providing and displaying his goods. And as Mr. Savage has said ("Method in book selection," *The Library World*, October,

Author	Liby. Classn.				
Ordered	Title				
Vendor	date	edn.	pub'r.	price	
Date rec'd.	worn out	dirty	requires bdg.	out of date	not in demand
Cost	lost or damaged	not recovered	missing	other copies	
	replace	transfer	discard	O.P.	
Notes	date	edn.	pub'r.	price	
Date of Comm.	Approved	Second-hand	Deferred	Disapproved	

FIG. 4

1938), "The better our technical section (if wanted at all) the greater the criticism of it, and the more numerous the claims for additions ; if weak it remains weak, for technicians avoid it as salesmen avoid bankrupts, and librarians conclude unwarrantably that money is wasted strengthening it."

The method of revision of stock may be taken as being similar to the method of selecting the stock for a new library described in Chapter XIII. The general and special bibliographies must be checked as well as the catalogues and bulletins of other libraries, the selection being kept within the funds available and the approximate number of books desired, bearing in mind the general principles of book selection and the special principles relating to the subject and the district concerned.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CONCLUSION

Book selection—art or science?—New trends in library practice.  
—Supply creates demand.—Quality of the book selector.

#### BOOK SELECTION—ART OR SCIENCE

HOWEVER logically, or illogically, we may argue that book selection is a science there can be no doubt that as practised to-day book selection is an art. This has been the theme of this book. Book selection is not a thing which may be measured with a yard stick. It cannot be stamped out with the precision of any machine. Nor can a book be analysed with the definiteness with which we can analyse a piece of metal. We need only to compare the pronouncements of a few reviews on one book to assure ourselves of this. Many books are concerned with theories, and theories are always debatable—they always have their adherents and opponents.

Nevertheless, book selection is an art to which the benefits of science should be added. This has been indicated at the beginning of this book in the case of the community survey. We have not yet arrived at a complete psychology of reading, but if and when we do, that will help us select books in a more scientific manner.

Psychologists have conducted considerable research on the reading process during the past fifty years and we are now able to state fairly definitely the



most suitable physical form in which a book should be produced. Details of this research will be found in Chapter IV of the present writer's *Reading; an historical and psychological study* (Philip, 1939).

Various common fallacies about reading habits have been exploded in recent years. The theory that working people read about machinery and its effects on civilisation has been contradicted, yet many books on sociological and identical problems are still allocated to libraries in working class areas. Again, few people in rural areas wish to read about agriculture. The farmer has little time to read books on his job by a botanist, neither has the poultry-keeper the inclination to read books on his job or hobby by scientists. Actually, books on poultry-keeping are of more value and interest to the town fancier than his rural cousin. Further, such books should be of an essentially practical nature, and preferably written by persons actually in the poultry fancy.

The advent of county library schemes has brought further problems. Thus, for instance, the librarian of the West Riding County Libraries has to provide for an agricultural, mining, and an industrial population. Scientific methods may be introduced in the form of a technique of change and interchange in these county library systems. Experience in one of the most densely populated of the county libraries, has shown me that the actual book selection (and by "book selection" I mean not only the initial selection but the making up of collections for delivery to centres, and the changing of these collections—unless they are merely transferred from centre to centre like so many sheep) is still an art rather than a science. This is due partly to inadequate book funds, but also

to the impossibility, mentioned above, of fixing a certain book to a specific reader with the skill that a carpenter can fix a knob to a door, or with precision that pieces of machinery—although made independently—can be made to “fit” when brought together. At the same time a book is not “complete” until it has found a reader.

And again we know only too well that reading tastes (due partly to press campaigns) vary from day to day—and that variations cannot be plotted on a graph, at least not until after the event. It is not easy to *forecast* reading. Who would have thought that the interest in books on pacifism and peace of a year or so ago would have been replaced by an interest in A.R.P. work.

#### NEW TRENDS IN LIBRARY PRACTICE

We must also consider any new trends which are manifesting themselves in library practice. Despite the rapid advances made in library practice and in the development of the library service during recent years, comparatively little attention has been given to the actual departments required for a library. It seemed an absolute law that a reference and a lending department had to be maintained in all central libraries. Commercial libraries were developed during and after the Great War to facilitate the trade revival. Separate departments for children have become practically universal, and experiments have been made with adolescent departments.

Partly owing to the economic conditions prevailing at that time, and partly owing to the stocking of libraries with liberal supplies of popular fiction due to the desire of many librarians to increase the popularity of the libraries under their control, the

demands made upon public libraries during the late nineteen-twenties, became greater than any hitherto experienced.

At the same time there was a movement to brighten the dull and forbidding reference libraries. New non-fiction of a general nature was added to the reference department instead of the encyclopædias, etc., and the standard academic works which were previously allowed to monopolise the reference shelves. Contemporaneously that so-called, but much cherished, person in library literature, the "browser" has been driven away by the high speed methods now prevalent in a large and busy lending library, only to seek solace in the reference department.

The logical outcome of this development seems to be to transfer non-fiction, except of a popular and "general-reader" variety, from the lending to the reference shelves, and permit borrowing, within certain limits, from there. Those who want quietness, students and such-like, should be provided with separate rooms. The forbidding quietness of the reference department must disappear if the public are to derive full benefit from the library service.

#### SUPPLY CREATES DEMAND

Mention has already been made that the supply and display of good books can create a demand for them. The successful shopkeeper has first of all to stock and display good articles in order to arouse and stimulate interest in them. However well those goods may be displayed if we find on trial that they are inferior we do not come for more. We look to the retailer to draw our attention to articles and to assist us in our choice. Similarly with libraries. At the same time, this policy must be used with dis-

cretion—it would serve no useful purpose to provide Wendt's *Foundry Work* in a seaside town.

### QUALITY OF THE BOOK SELECTOR

And what of the qualities of the book selector? Freedom from bias can hardly be recommended, although that is the gospel usually preached. A librarian may have a preference for motor cars and little inclination for poetry. It is inevitable that his book selection in the former subject is the better, but that is infinitely preferable to him having no interest in either and as a consequence his book selection being scanty and mediocre in both topics.

Yet he should beware lest his bias induce him to omit certain aspects of subjects and books belonging to particular schools of thought which he dislikes. At the same time bias indicates an interest in matters, and which is far more satisfactory than mere indifference, lack of knowledge, and a "know-nothing" attitude.

Ability, rather than learning, is his chief quality. Ability to assess, ability to discriminate, and ability to reason. He should be aware, as far as humanly possible, of current events (by "current events" I mean not only wars and such-like, but also the general trends in science, art and everyday life) and deduce therefrom the likely demands upon the library service.

He should possess sufficient grounding in scholarship to enable him to discriminate, but—and I feel that this is the more important factor—those qualities of a sound business man to enable him to plan and administer the library service on rational, progressive, and thorough, rather than haphazard lines.



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## INDEX

- Aids to book selection, 31 ff, 81-83  
 American guides to book selection,  
     17-19, 22-23, 39-40  
 American Library Association  
     *Booklist*, 39-40  
     *Catalog*, 22  
     "Reading with a purpose"  
         series, 26  
*Ammario bibliographia Italiano di*  
*diritto, economica e politica*, 45  
 Appeal, book selection by, 2-6  
 Art of book selection, 181-83  
 ASLIB  
     *Booklist*, 38-39, 108  
     *Select list of Standard British*  
         *Scientific and Technical books*,  
         106-107
- Basic stock, 125-26, 155-59  
 Bias of book selector, 13, 185  
*Biblio*, 44  
*Bibliografía española*, 45  
*Bibliografía general española e his-*  
*pano-americana*, 45  
*Bibliographie de la France*, 44  
 Bibliographies  
     selective : American, 22-23  
         English, 19-21  
     special subjects, 24-31  
     trade : American, 17-19, 39-40  
         English, 16-17, 35-37  
         Foreign, 44-45
- Biography  
     discarding, 177  
     selection (reference libraries), 103  
 Binding, 54-55  
 Blind, books for, 90-91  
 Board of Education report, 1927—  
     on reference libraries, 97  
 Bondell, Elsa de, *jt. author*, *see* Hill,  
     R.A. and Bondell, Elsa de  
 Bonny, H. V. *Reading*, 53, 182  
 Book fund, 167-68  
 Book list, 162-64  
 Book production, 53-57  
*Book Review Digest*, 18-19, 39  
 Book reviews, *see* Reviews
- Book selection, art or science ? 181-  
     83  
 Book selection card, 71  
 Book selector, qualities of, 185  
*Bookseller*, 35, 36  
 Books sub-committee, 162-64  
 Branch libraries, 124 ff.  
     county branch libraries, 132-34,  
         143-44  
 British Science Guild. *Catalogue of*  
*British Scientific and Technical*  
*Books*, 107  
 Brown, J. D. *Manual of library*  
*economy*, 66
- Callander, T. E.  
     on mobilizing stock in municipal  
         branch libraries, 126-28  
     on selecting stock for a new  
         library, 155-59  
 Catalogues of libraries, 21, 24-26  
 Censorship, 92-94  
     children's books, 121  
 Censorship of Publications Act,  
     1929, 94  
 Centralisation, 124-25  
 Children's books, guides to, 41-43  
*Children's Catalog*, 41-42  
 Children's libraries, 117 ff  
     county libraries, 144-45  
     lending department, 119-21  
     reference department, 119-20  
 Children's literature, 119-21  
     guides to, 41-43  
 Commercial, science and technical  
     books, guides to, 106-108  
 Commercial, science and technical  
     periodicals, 109-16  
 Commercial, science and technology  
     libraries, 104 ff  
 Committee work, 162-64  
 Community survey, 61-64  
 Co-operative book buying, 174  
 Cost, 161  
 County libraries, 130 ff  
*County Libraries Manual*, 143  
*County Libraries Statistical Report*,  
     1931-32, 143



- Cowley, J. D. *The use of reference material*, 43, 99  
*Criterion*, 34  
*Cumulative Book Index*, 17  
*Cumulative Book List*, 17, 36  
*Current literature*, 35-36
- Dagenham Public Libraries. *Four thousand recommended books*, 21
- Demand,  
 anticipation of, 9-10  
 evaluation of, 6-9  
 supply and, 184-85
- Deutsche Nationalbibliographie*, 45  
*Deutsches Bücherverzeichnis*, 45
- Dickinson, A. D. *The best books of the decade*, 23
- Discarding, 171 ff  
 card, 179  
 method of, 177-78  
 rules for, 175-77
- Discount, 165-67
- Duplication  
 children's books, 117  
 county libraries, 139-42  
 urban lending libraries, 91-92
- Economics  
 bibliographies, 27-29  
 book reviewing periodicals, 82  
 discarding, 176  
 periodicals, 150  
 selection (lending libraries), 88  
 selection (reference libraries), 101-2
- Edition  
 definition of, 50  
 discarding, 175
- Eire, censorship in, 94
- English Catalogus of Books*, 17
- Esdaile, A. *Introduction to Bibliography*, 53
- Evaluation of demand, 6-9
- Exchanges of stock : urban libraries 126-28
- Facsimile binding, 160
- Faraday, J. G. *Twelve years of children's books*, 41
- Fiction, 87-88  
 children's libraries, 120
- Finance, 67-68, 161, 162 ff
- Fine Arts  
 bibliographies, 29  
 book reviewing periodicals, 83  
 discarding, 176  
 periodicals, 151-52
- Fine Arts  
 selection (lending libraries), 89  
 selection (reference libraries), 102
- Foreign literature, guides to, 44-45
- Format, 53-57  
 children's books, 121-22
- French literature, guides to, 44-45
- Gardner, F. M., ed. "Recommended Books," 37  
 on book reviewing, 75-76
- Garrod, H. W., 87-88
- Generalia  
 bibliographies, 27  
 periodicals, 149  
 selection (reference libraries), 101
- Geography, *see* Travel
- German literature, guides to, 45
- Giornale della libreria*, 45
- Graham, Bessie. *The Bookman's Manual*, 23
- Guides to book selection, 15 ff
- Halbjahrsverzeichnis der Neuerscheinungen*, 45
- Headlines, 56-57
- Herefordshire County Libraries  
 catalogues, 25  
 regional branches, 135
- Hill, R. A. and Bondell, Elsa de *Children's books from foreign languages*, 42
- History  
 bibliographies, 30-31  
 book reviewing periodicals, 83  
 discarding, 177  
 periodicals, 152  
 selection (lending libraries), 90  
 selection (reference libraries), 103
- Impression, definition of, 50
- Industrial Arts Index*, 107
- Influences on book selection, 91
- Initial stock, 153
- Ireland, *see* Eire
- Italian literature, guides to, 45
- Junior Bookshelf*, 43
- Language  
 bibliographies, 29  
 book reviewing periodicals, 83  
 discarding, 176  
 periodicals, 150  
 selection (lending libraries), 88  
 selection (reference libraries), 102

- Laski, H. J., 94-95  
 Leeds Public Libraries. "What to read" series, 24  
 Lending libraries, 84 ff  
   children's libraries, 119-21  
   county libraries, 130 ff  
   urban branch libraries, 124 ff  
 Leyland, E. A. *The public library and the adolescent*, 42  
*Librarian*, 36-37  
*Librairie française*, La, 44  
 Library Association,  
   and book selection guide, 37-39  
*Books to Read, Books for Youth*, 19-20, 41  
 Library catalogues, 21, 24-26  
*Library Review*, 76  
*Library World*, 36, 37  
*Life and Letters To-day*, 34  
 Limited editions, 50-51  
*Listener*, 33  
 Literature  
   bibliographies, 29-30  
   book reviewing periodicals, 83  
   discarding, 176  
   periodicals, 152  
   selection (lending libraries), 89  
   selection (reference libraries), 102  
 Liverpool Public Libraries. *Catalogue . . . of non-fiction . . .* 21  
 Local collections, 103  
   county libraries, 142  
*London Mercury*, 33-34  
 McColvin, E. R. *jt. author, see*  
   McColvin, L. R. *and* McColvin, E. R.  
 McColvin, L. R., on the evaluation of demand, 7, 12-13  
 McColvin, L. R. *and* McColvin, E. R. *Library stock and assistance to readers*, 43, 99  
 McColvin, L. R. *and* Reeves, H. *Music libraries*, 89  
 McKerrow, R. B. *Bibliography*, 53  
 Magazines, *see* Periodicals and magazines  
 Medicine  
   bibliographies, 29  
   book reviewing periodicals, 82  
   periodicals, 151  
   selection (lending libraries), 89  
   selection (reference libraries), 102  
 Method of book selection, 69 ff, 154-55  
 Middlesex County Libraries: *Catalogues*, 24-25  
 Minto, John. *Reference Books*, 43  
 Morison, Stanley. *First principles of typography*, 56  
 Mudge, I. G. *Guide to Reference Books*, 44  
 Munford, W. A. *Three thousand books for a public library*, 20  
 Music  
   bibliographies, 29  
   book reviewing periodicals, 83  
   periodicals, 151-52  
   selection (lending libraries), 89  
   selection (reference libraries), 102  
 National Book Council, 26, 41  
 National Central Library, 5, 7  
 National Library for the Blind, 90  
 Net Book Agreement, 165-67  
 New edition  
   definition of, 50  
   replacement by, 175  
 New libraries: selection of stock, 153 ff  
 Newspapers, *see* Periodicals and magazines  
*New Statesman and Nation*, 33  
 Non-fiction, 85-90  
*Observer*, 33  
 O'Leary, J. G., on book maintenance fund, 167-68  
 Order work, 70-73, 162 ff  
 Paper, 55  
 Paper covered books, 57  
 Periodicals and magazines  
   children's libraries, 122-23  
   (containing reviews), 81-83  
   commercial, science and technical, 109-116  
   reading rooms, 147 ff  
   reference libraries, 98  
 Philip, A. J. *Best books of the Year*, 21, 37  
 Philology, *see* Language  
 Philosophy  
   bibliographies, 27  
   book reviewing periodicals, 81  
   discarding, 176  
   periodicals, 149-50  
   selection (lending libraries), 88  
   selection (reference libraries), 101  
 Planning of book selection, 58 ff  
 Pool stock, 173, 177  
 Potential demand, 154

- Principles of book selection, 1 ff,  
155-59
- Proportions of stock by subject, 65-  
67
- Psychology  
bibliographies, 27  
book reviewing periodicals, 81  
discarding, 176  
periodicals, 149-50  
selection (lending libraries), 88  
selection (reference libraries), 101
- Publishers' catalogues, 32
- Publishers' Circular*, 35
- Publishers' Trade List Annual*, 17
- Publishers' Weekly*, 39
- Purchasing, 161, 162 ff
- Qualifications for book selection, 13,  
185
- Quarterly Review*, 34
- Range, book selection by, 2-6
- Rare books, 100
- Readers' proposals, *see* Suggestions
- Reading habits, 182
- Reading rooms, 147 ff
- "Recommended Books," 37
- Reeves, H. *jt. author*, *see* McColvin,  
L. R. and Reeves, H.
- Reference books,  
definition of, 96-97  
guides to, 43-44, 99  
types of, 97-99
- Reference Catalogue of Current Liter-  
ature*, 16
- Reference libraries, 96 ff  
children's libraries, 119-20  
county libraries, 143  
urban branch libraries, 128-29
- Regional branches—county  
libraries, 132-34
- Regional library service, 5, 7-9
- Reinforced publishers' casing, 159-  
60
- Religion,  
bibliographies, 27  
book reviewing periodicals, 81  
discarding, 176  
periodicals, 150  
selection (lending libraries), 88  
selection (reference libraries), 101
- Remainders, 169
- Replacement card, 179
- Requisitions—county libraries, 145-  
46
- Review copies, 168-69
- Reviews, 73-78  
American, 34-35  
English, 32-34  
(list of periodicals), 81-83  
*see also Book Review Digest*
- Revision of stock, 178-80
- Roberts, A. D. *Guide to technical  
literature*, 106
- Savage, E. A., on book selection,  
179-80
- Sayers, W. C. B., on children's  
libraries, 118  
on local collections, 103  
on revision of stock, 178
- Scheda cumulativa italiana*, L. A., 45
- School libraries, 144-45
- Science  
bibliographies, 29  
book reviewing periodicals, 82  
discarding, 176  
periodicals, 150  
selection (lending libraries), 88-89  
selection (reference libraries), 102
- Science libraries, *see* Commercial,  
science and technology libraries,
- Science of book selection, 11-13, 181-  
83
- Second-hand books, 168
- Series, 51
- Sharp, H. A.  
on duplication of fiction, 92  
on reading interests, 154
- Sheffield City Libraries—display of  
children's books, 121
- Shores, Louis. *Basic Reference  
Books*, 44
- Size of books, 54
- Smith, B. Oliph, on county libraries,  
137, 141-42
- Sociology  
bibliographies, 27-29  
book reviewing periodicals, 82  
discarding, 176  
periodicals, 150  
selection (lending libraries), 88  
selection (reference libraries), 101-  
102
- Sonnenschein, W. S. *The Best  
Books*, 19
- Spanish literature, guides to, 45
- Special collections, 103
- Specialists—and book selection, 80
- Spectator*, 33
- Spirax bindings, 57
- Staff book committee, 78-79

- Standard Catalog for public libraries*,  
 22, 40  
 Stevenson, W. B., on paper covered  
 books, 57  
 Students' books, 134, 146  
 Suggestions, 80-81  
     county libraries, 145-46  
*Sunday Times*, 33  
 Supply and demand, 184-85  
  
*Tägliches Verzeichnis der Neuer-  
 scheinungen*, 45  
*Technical Book Review Index*, 40, 108  
 Technology libraries, *see* Com-  
 mercial, science and technology  
 libraries  
 Theory of book selection, 1 ff  
*Times Literary Supplement*, 32-33  
     foreign books section, 45  
 Title page, 57  
 Topography, *see* Travel  
 Trade Bibliographies, *see* Biblio-  
 graphs: trade  
 Translators, 52-53  
 Travel  
     book reviewing periodicals, 83  
     discarding, 176  
     Travel  
         periodicals, 152  
         selection (lending libraries), 90  
         selection (reference libraries), 103  
     Typography, 55-56  
  
*United States Catalog*, 17  
 Useful Arts  
     bibliographies, 29  
     book reviewing periodicals, 83  
     discarding, 176  
     periodicals, 151  
     selection (lending libraries), 89  
     selection (reference libraries), 102  
  
*Vollständiges Bücherlexikon*, 45  
  
 Warner, John, on reference books,  
 96-99  
 Wellard, J. H., on the community  
 survey, 61-64  
 Welsford, P. S. J., on the Net Book  
 Agreement, 166  
*Wilson Bulletin*, 40  
 Withdrawals, *see* Discarding  
 Woodbine, Herbert, "Reference  
 Libraries," 44, 99